NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

FILM ART SPECIAL

STARRING

RIPLEY

Draw and paint sci-fi's
most iconic character!

40TH **ANNIVERSARY** OF **ALIEN**

FEATURING

BLADE RUNNER 2049

Mike Hill shares his designs
for the futuristic neo-noir

KEYFRAME MASTERCLASS

Create compelling
film concept art

+

36

SKETCHES FROM
JURASSIC WORLD
READY PLAYER ONE
FANTASTIC BEASTS

AND MORE!

INTERVIEW

ANTHONY FRANCISCO

Marvel Studios'
vis dev artist on
Thor and more...

INCLUDING

BLACK PANTHER
DOCTOR STRANGE
**GUARDIANS OF
THE GALAXY**
ANT-MAN

FUTURE

ISSUE **173**

GAME OF THRONES! ARTISTS FROM THE SHOW REVEAL ART BEYOND WESTEROS

Welcome to…

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

We've gathered a broad mix of talented artists from the world of film to help you learn more about the art and processes behind the movies you love.

If you've ever wondered about the sort of work that's required for concept design, look no further than Mike Hill's interview on page 54. He explains the mind-boggling process that he goes through to create his work. I just marvel at the thought and attention to detail that goes into parts of the design that we'll never see. You'll also get inspired by Anthony Francisco's interview (page 36) about his incredible journey from US Navy boatswain's mate to Marvel Studios senior vis-dev artist.

Our workshop section is a treat this issue, with advice on character design, creating keyframe concept art, Photoshop's Pattern Stamp tool and the penultimate figure-drawing workshop (sniff!) from Patrick J Jones. There's still time to collect the whole series, turn to page 46 to find out how to get these editions in either print or digital.

As ever, thank you for picking up ImagineFX. Please tells us your thoughts at the address below.

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

EDITOR'S CHOICE
Three of my top picks this month…

20

Pixel art appreciation
The great message from this story is to paint what you love to paint and don't worry about what others think.

48

Sketchbook
Dive into the digital sketches of one of the most in-demand artists in film right now: Jama Jurabaev.

66

Legend vs aliens
For me, Ellen Ripley is an unsurpassed female icon of film. Kevin McGivern created a fantastic homage.

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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
Resources

Getting hold of this issue's videos and custom brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at **https://ifxm.ag/film173artspecial**

OVER 4 HOURS of video tutorials from pro artists to watch and learn from!

Paint strong character film art

Watch Kevin McGivern's workshop video as he illustrates Ripley from Alien, in the film's 40th anniversary year. Turn to page 66 to learn his colour, lighting and texture techniques.

GET YOUR RESOURCES

You're three steps away from this issue's resource files...

1 Go to the website
Type this into your browser's address bar (not the search bar):
https://ifxm.ag/film173artspecial

2 Find the files you want
Search through the list of resources to download.

3 Download what you need...
Download the files or watch them via a bespoke YouTube link.

WORKSHOPS

Get more from Photoshop's Pattern Stamp tool
Watch how concept artist Lino Drieghe quickly creates a sci-fi landscape. More on page 72.

Balance light and shade in your figure art
Patrick J Jones covers chiaroscuro in his workshop video, and there's more insights on page 86.

TRAINING Watch a clip from Rendering/Blending…
…then turn to page 99 to see what we thought of Anthony Jones' instructional video.

PLUS 671 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING…

WET_SPONGE
Keyframe artist Henry Fong uses this brush to paint in rim lighting, to help him finalise a piece.

BEST PENCIL
This month's cover artist, Kevin McGivern, says this brush's strokes resemble those of pencil on paper.

SAMPLED_BRUSH
Henry used this custom brush – one of 667 he supplied – to create the scuff marks on the mechanic's overalls.

FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Melvin Chan

LOCATION: Australia **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.melvinchanart.com

Self-taught Melvin is a freelance illustrator and concept artist. Recently, he's been working on his personal project entitled Tails of the Pantheon.

1 ELBEZEL, THE SACRED GROVE

"Elbezel is a character who I painted for my Tails of the Pantheon series. He revived my love for art and holds a special place in my heart."

2 AULIANA, THE GUARDIAN'S ARROW

"I like the idea of contrasting designs. Unlike many of my other characters in this series, which are humanoid hybrids, I kept Auliana true to an owl."

3 TYBERIUS, THE SUN'S JUSTICE

"This character is a great representation of the visuals for this series. He's a balance of cute and tough, wrapped up in one furry bundle."
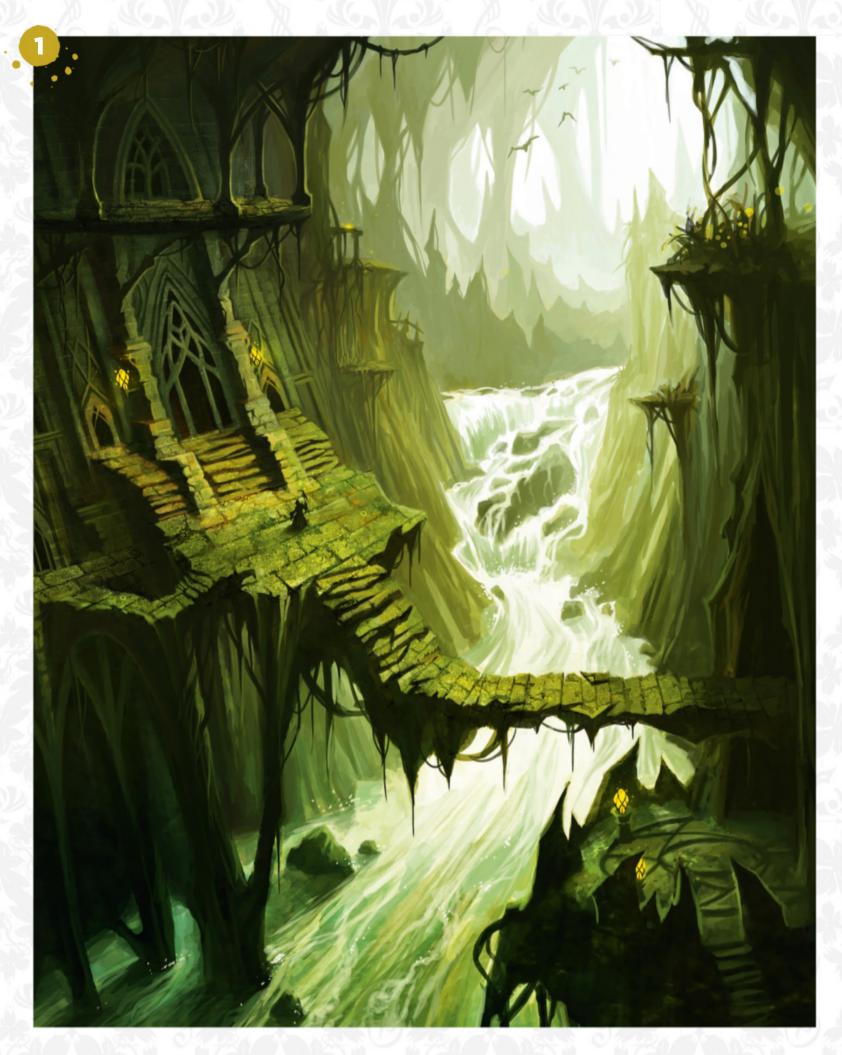
FXPosé

Lora Lee

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Paintstorm Studio **WEB:** www.loraleeart.com

Freelance artist and assistant university professor Lora has been drawing, designing and animating for over a decade. "I love to explore artistic styles, different cultures and telling stories," she says.

1 THE CAVE

"A piece of atmospheric concept art inspired by my adventure in a cave in southwest China. I love to draw inspiration from nature and take my own reference and texture images."

2 VOICES OF THE FIRE

"Fascinated by traditional Tibetan costumes and folk art, I experimented with digital painting techniques to render the fire and smoke and create a surreal ceremony scene."

3 THE YOUNG HEALER
"I've been creating a series of fantasy illustrations in Photoshop and Paintstorm, after being inspired by the ancient Tibetan folk religion and cultural heritage. This piece depicts a healing ritual."

4 OLD HOUSE
"This is piece of concept art that I created to use as reference for a 3D environment, which I wanted to build in Autodesk Maya. It was a demo project for a course I taught."

FXPosé
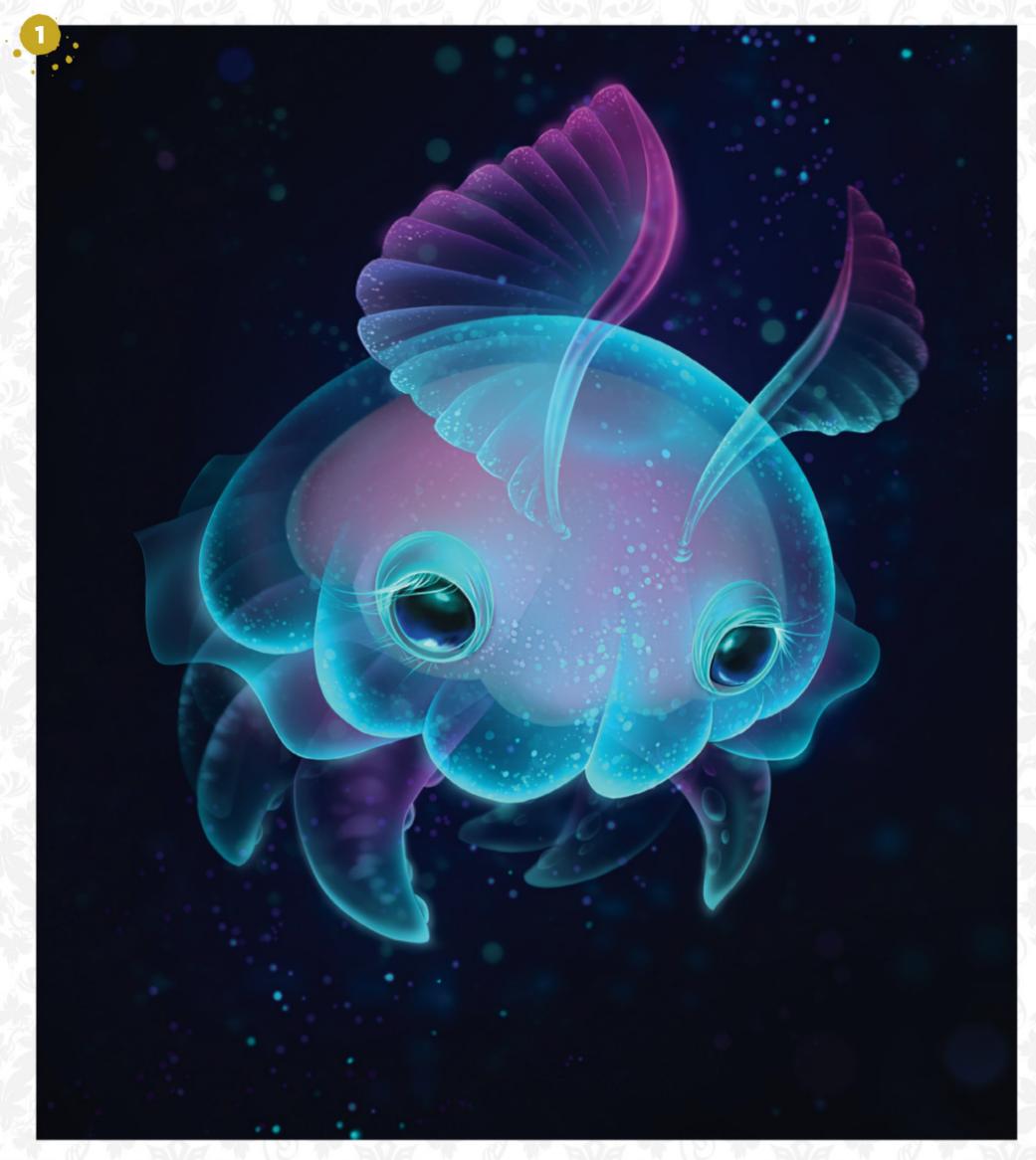
Natalie Russo

LOCATION: Sweden   **MEDIA:** Photoshop   **WEB:** www.natalierusso.com
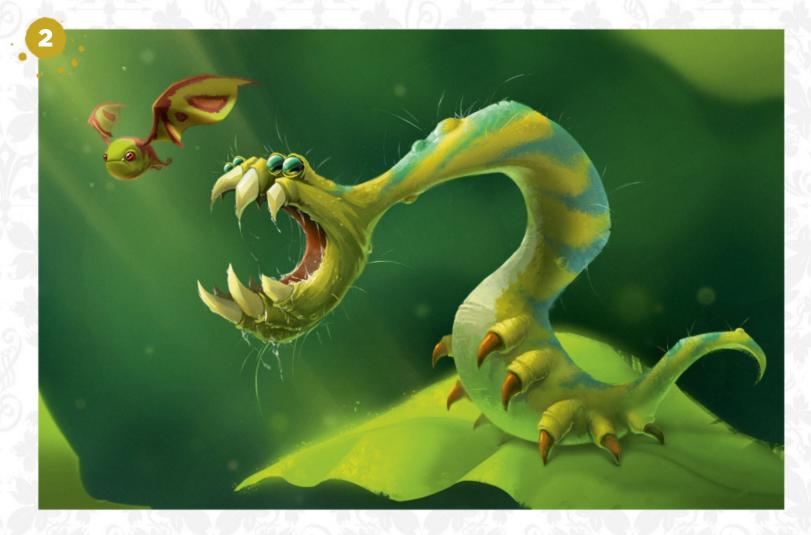
As a freelance concept artist and creature designer, Natalie combines her love of all critters with her passion for creating art and designing narratives.

1 BISCUIT, THE DEEP SEA JELLY BUN

"I've long held a fascination with fish and deep-sea critters. With Biscuit I wanted to design a glowing jellyfish that was cute like a bunny."

2 CHOMPER
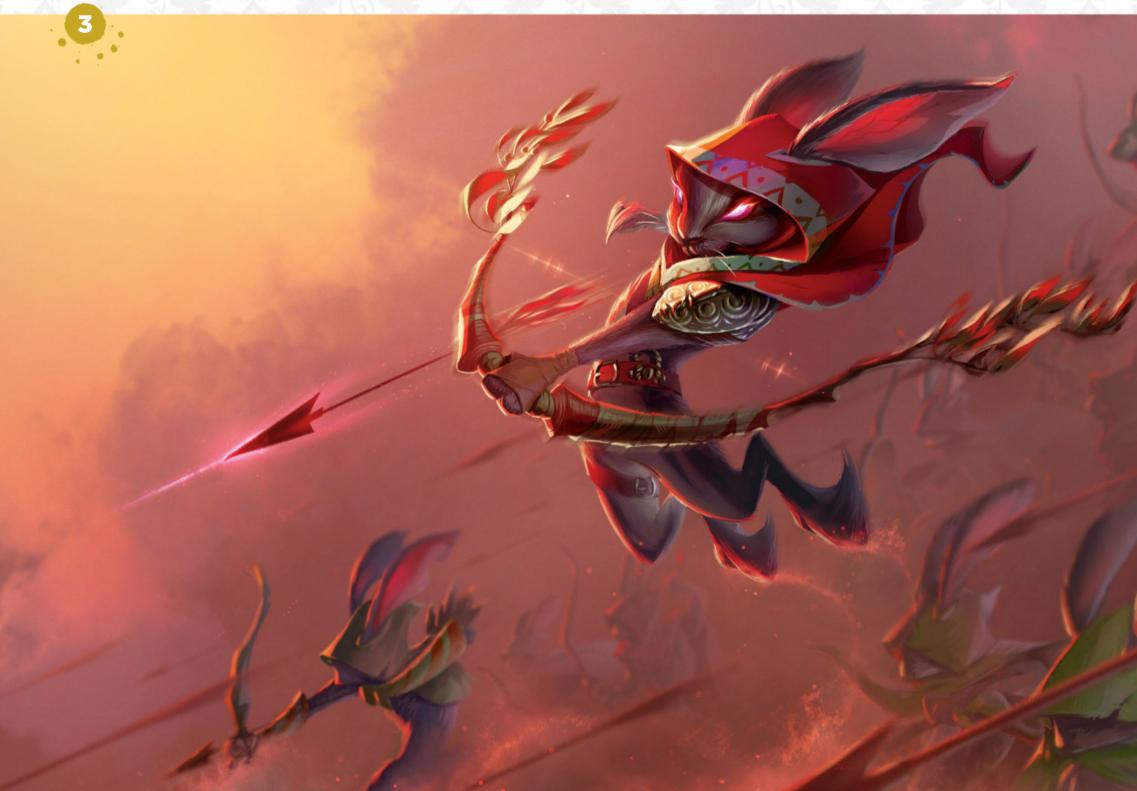
"I wanted to illustrate a fearsome bug-like world in the forest. I used lighting to direct the viewer's eye to the focal point of the piece: those jaws about to strike!"

3 SIEGE OF THE COTTONTAIL

"For this scene of bunnies going into battle I focused on the lighting, colour palette and composition to help give a more dramatic mood to the narrative."

FXPosé

Chase Henson

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Photoshop, oil paint **WEB:** www.artofchasehenson.com

Chase is an independent fantasy artist who's obsessed with storytelling, mythology and colour. He's working on a personal project entitled Book of Olith: Sacred Chains, and also finds time to be part of the band Mome Wrath.

1 SISTERS OF CREATION

"Taken from the introduction to the Book of Olith. The story is about an archeologist by the name of Ried, under pressure from the university to prove the Old Gods existed."

2 TEMPLE OF AIR

"He'd been the one to explain to them the importance of this temple. How it was the source of all the air in the gods' world, and without it they would all perish."

3 PRIESTESS OF SHADOW

"Her purple skin seemed to glow in the unearthly smoke and lights of this realm, as she raised her hand and a single wisp of shadow pierced the man's heart."

FXPosé
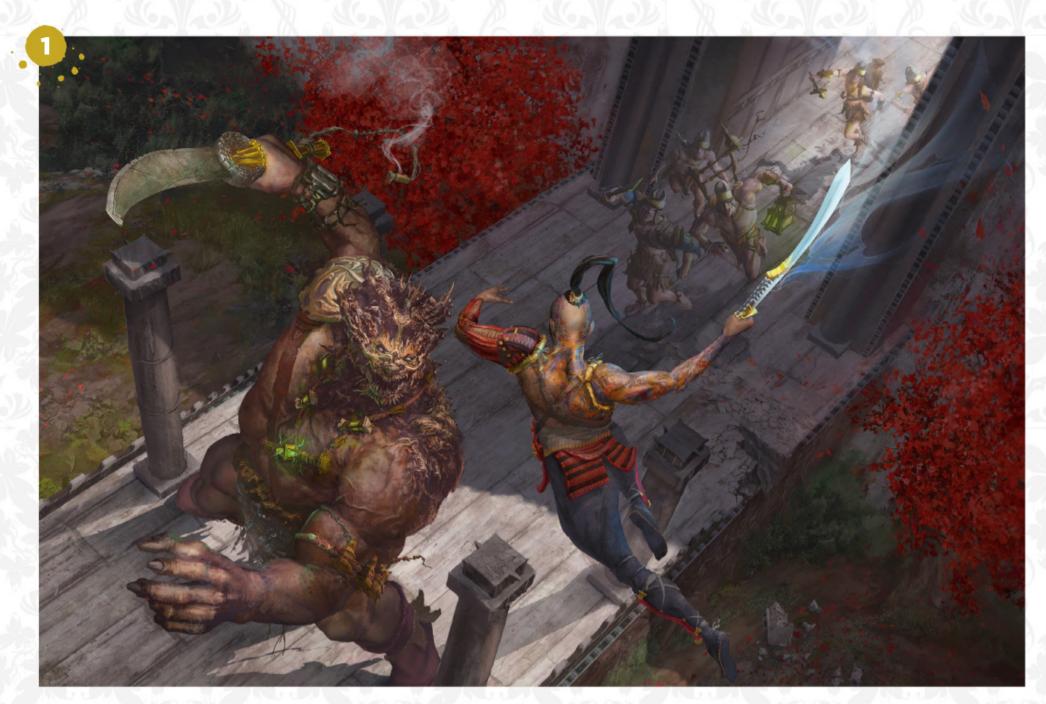
Cornelius Cockroft

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.artstation.com/corneliuscockroft

Cornelius – aka Corny – got a bit of a late start on his artistic journey. He's been creating digital artwork for a couple of years now, mainly at Brainstorm School in LA.

1 GATE ASSAULT
"This is the fourth in a series of keyframes inspired by feudal Japan. I tried to capture the moment right before the battle gets down and dirty."

2 REDHOOK KITCHEN
"This is part of a series I'm working on. Mob enforcers arrive at one of their larger drug kitchens to set a trap for a vigilante who's been disrupting their business."

3 MINSTREL
"This general's soldiers have been twisted by strange magic. He's been known to play his guitar even as the battle rages."

4 LAST RED RIBBON
"A sorceress monarch inspecting her newest trophy. The ribbons are worn by the ruling family of her current enemy, and she likes to display each one after their heads have been taken."

Matej Jan started drawing on the ZX Spectrum in the early 90s, when pixel art was basically the only choice.

Richard Schmidbauer's gaming inspirations include Xenon 2, Hyper Light Drifter and Super Time Force.

Power to the pixels

Creative blocks **Dom Carter** talks to the masters of pixel art and discovers that their distinctive work is more than just a retro aesthetic

Nostalgia hits people in waves every few decades. When these waves break, we tend to see what we grew up with recycled by the media and sold back to us. In the case of pixel art however, a community of creators are producing images in the medium that go beyond mainstream acceptance.

Given that pixel art has strong connections to video games, a medium itself which hasn't been fully embraced as art yet, perhaps it's a

Raymond Schlitter's pixel art often features contrasts, both visually and conceptually.

natural fit for people with that independent, artistic sensibility.

"Of course pixel art stems primarily from games," says graphic artist **Richard Schmidbauer**, who was first blown away by the pixel-based graphics in Blizzard's Blackthorne for the Commodore 64. "But it's really bled into other

> ❝ Pixel art has bled into other forms of art in the past few years ❞

forms of art in the past few years. You tend to see it in videos, clothing and pop culture. It's become so popular because a lot of people who grew up with those games are now creating various things. So most people today are used to seeing pixel art as a medium of expression."

Pixel artist and game designer **Raymond Schlitter**, AKA Slynyrd, has a deep-seated affinity to the aesthetic, having grown up in the 80s and 90s. "I instantly ➡

Is pixel art experiencing a renaissance this year?
It's grown in size, as well as proportionally, especially when you look at events like The Game Awards or Independent Games Festival. You have titles like Stardew Valley outselling AAA games, or The Last Night reported as one of the most beautiful things to come out of E3.

What can pixel art achieve that other mediums can't?
When a beginner and a master put down a pixel, the result is the same. No other medium can claim that. Yet while this makes it easy on a technical level, you still have to learn your art basics to have good lighting, colours, anatomy and composition. But in general, pixel art is very friendly to beginners.

Does pixel art put people off because of its games heritage?
It definitely alienates some. It's the same for other styles, such as comics/manga/anime. They all come out of the entertainment industry and it's hard to break the connection that they're just a by-product. You won't see them in traditional art galleries, but that's a problem for the outside world.
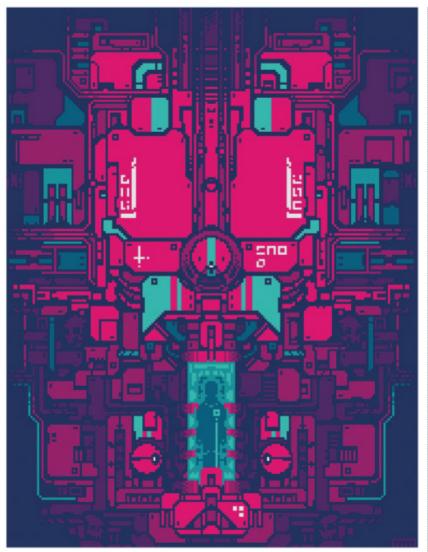
We just need to stop seeking external validation, and take ourselves as seriously as we want. When you grow up and start caring less about what others think of you, you can just enjoy doing what you love. As we start putting up our own art shows and comic-cons and esport events, the tables will turn.
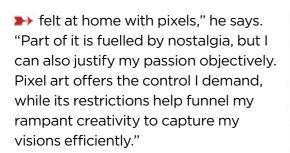
Matej is a game development expert who runs Retronator, a daily news site dedicated to pixel art.

www.matejjan.com

"At first it feels like it takes forever to make anything with pixel art," says Raymond. "But once you develop some proficiency you can generate art very quickly."

➡ felt at home with pixels," he says. "Part of it is fuelled by nostalgia, but I can also justify my passion objectively. Pixel art offers the control I demand, while its restrictions help funnel my rampant creativity to capture my visions efficiently."

PIXEL PRACTICALITIES

For **Matej Jan**, a pixel artist who also edits Retronator, a blog dedicated to the medium, the restrictions of pixel art makes it as distinct an art form as oil paintings or watercolours. "Pixel art is

Richard creates his pixel art using Pro Motion NG and Aseprite. "Both programs are on Steam and really cheap."

art first, pixels second," he says. "There's a layer of knowledge specific to pixel art, but you can see the artistic fundamentals at work underneath. If the foundation isn't there, no amount of polish can save you."

"The main constraints of pixel art would be the limitations in resolution and palette," says Richard. "You really have to work in a more impressionistic

> ❝ **Pixel art offers the control I require, while its restrictions help funnel my creativity** ❞

way. You have to try to describe a shape with the limited blocky space and colours, and still have it read well.

"However, the main constraints of the medium are also its biggest strength. You have to work within this frame, but you won't have to worry so much about other things. You can't add large amounts of detail and lose yourself in that because there's just not enough space. It leaves you more time to focus on the important parts, like composition. I find it liberating."
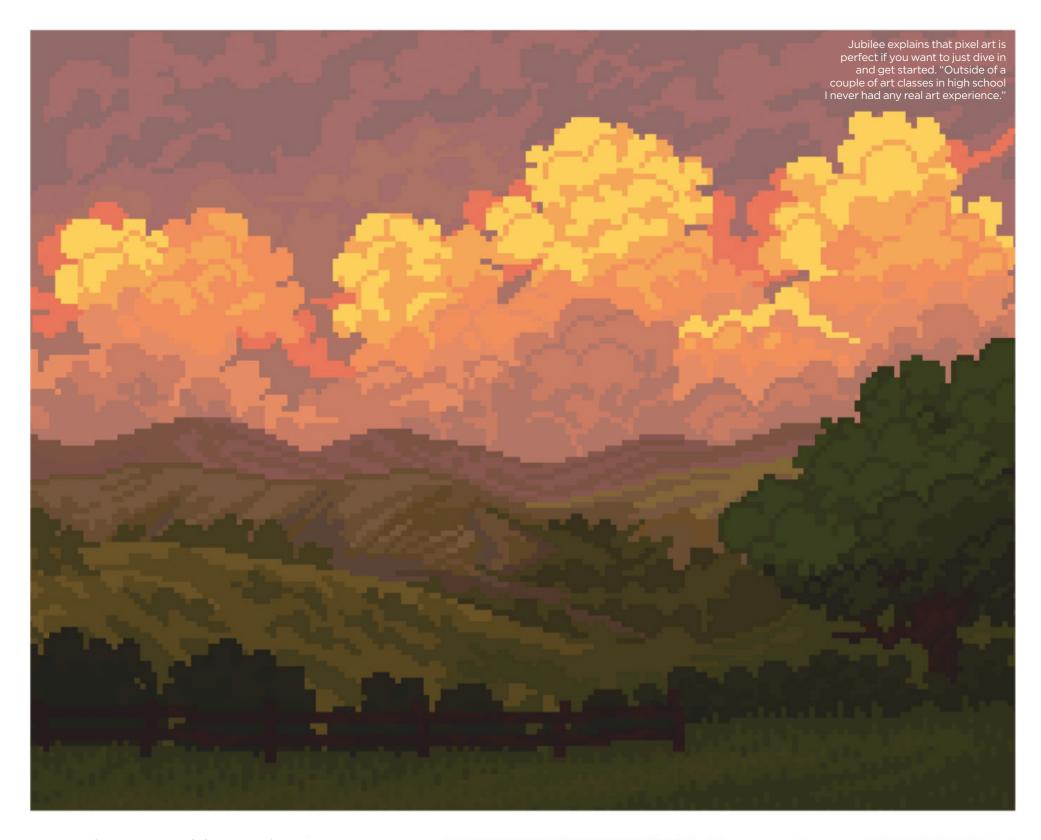
For pixel artist **Jubilee**, the creation process is

Matej is creating a free pixel art study guide that covers the basics. "I'm also turning it into a video game called Pixel Art Academy where you'll learn through a point-and-click adventure."

Jubilee explains that pixel art is perfect if you want to just dive in and get started. "Outside of a couple of art classes in high school I never had any real art experience."

very soothing, "I started doing pixel art as a hobby and found it calming to tap each little pixel into the image until you start to see something other then just little squares," she says. "I don't think there's any other medium that can give you such readable concise imagery on such a small scale."

As Matej points out, it's this lack of photorealism that adds artistic expression to pixel pictures. "Pixel art is a stylisation," he says. "When I look at [background pixel artist] Waneella's depictions of Japan, there's little factor of nostalgia. It's the same awe as I have for Ghost in the Shell's animated Hong Kong, or Into the Spider-Verse's 3D, post-processed New York City."

DO IT YOURSELF

For artists looking to take their first steps into the field of pixel art, the good news is that it's a very accessible

One of Matej's main inspirations were eBoy, "a trio of German digital artists who created fantastically rich isometric cities."
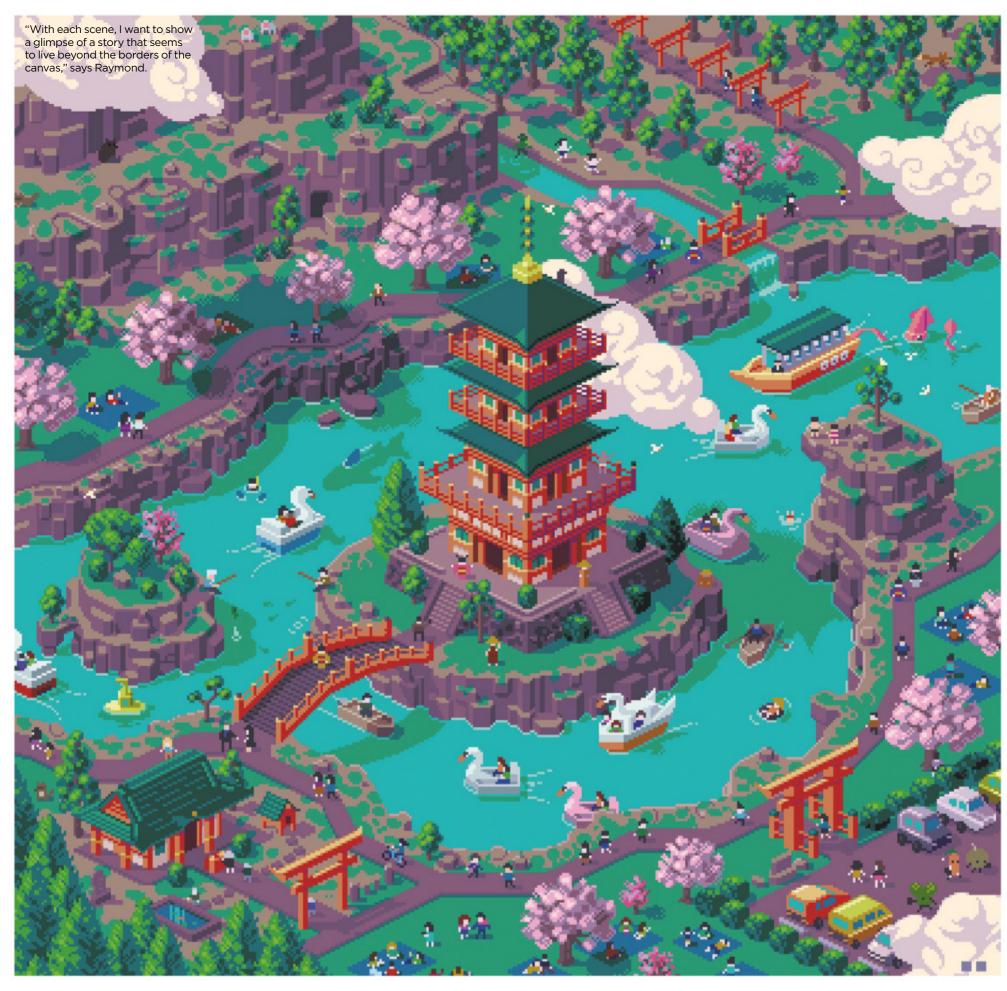
and budget-friendly medium to pick up. "Pixel art can be created using virtually any graphics software," says Raymond. "This makes the price of entry almost nothing."
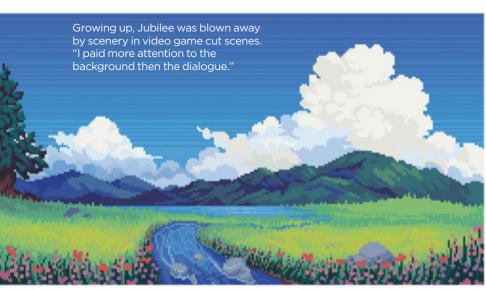
Readily available online resources, including Raymond's Pixelcasts on his Slynyrd YouTube channel (**https://ifxm.ag/slynyrd**), help to demystify the process. "While making pixel art can be difficult to master, a

beginner can learn to make serviceable art through self-guided observations," says the artist.

Thanks to its low data costs and small file sizes, pixel art is also easy to share online. "The low-spec parameters make it one of the most practical digital mediums," Raymond adds. "Once you develop some proficiency you can generate graphics very rapidly. The inherent uniformity ➤➤

"With each scene, I want to show a glimpse of a story that seems to live beyond the borders of the canvas," says Raymond.

Growing up, Jubilee was blown away by scenery in video game cut scenes. "I paid more attention to the background then the dialogue."

➤➤ of the pixel units enables you to easily recycle elements and use repetition to great effect. It's almost like you're building an image rather than illustrating."
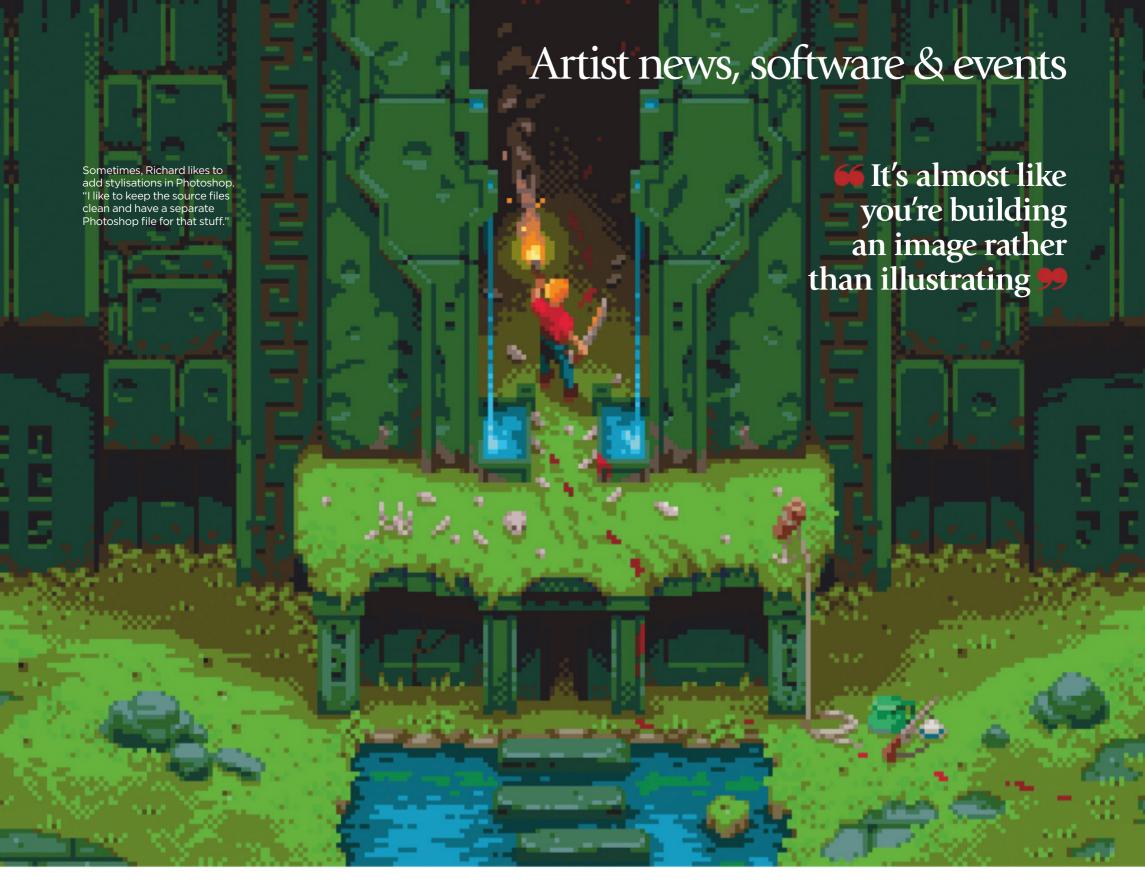
If you do feel like paying for actual pixel software, Richard estimates that you're only looking at forking out around $40. "But even Photoshop works for pixel art," he says.

"And before you get into building your own palettes, don't hesitate to try out famous and freely available palettes, such as Dawn Bringer 32.

They are very good and fun to work with. It's one less step to worry about," advises Richard

BROAD APPEAL

The growth of the pixel art community means there are also plenty of creators to learn from. Take Matej's Retronator blog (**www.retronator.com**), which started life as his personal art Tumblr back in 2010. Today he estimates that it attracts 30,000 readers who are keen to see what's going on in the pixel art scene. "And that's still small

Sometimes, Richard likes to add stylisations in Photoshop. "I like to keep the source files clean and have a separate Photoshop file for that stuff."

❝ **It's almost like you're building an image rather than illustrating** ❞

compared to some individual pixel artists, who have 100,000 followers and more," he says. "There are a lot of people who love pixel art."

This increased popularity of pixel art has also benefited the image of the medium, which in the past has sometimes been hamstrung by its connection to games. "With so many talented artists using the medium to make non-game-related art these days, pixel art seems to be turning some new heads," says Raymond.

"While most of my commission requests come from game-related projects, an increasing number come from unexpected places. I've done work for hip-hop, soul and rock musicians. I've even been approached by people in the fitness industry."

Jubilee agrees that it's an exciting time for the medium. "Each day, more and more artists are pushing the boundaries of what pixel art is, and it's awesome! I hope it becomes even more popular, because it's been nothing but positive for me."

"I'd dare say that everyone apart from millennials got lured into pixel art by nostalgia," says Matej.

Looking beyond Westeros' borders

West side Think you know Game of Thrones? Think again, as artists cast new light on unexplored corners of George RR Martin's world

A fantasy artist's raison d'être is to visualise worlds that only exist in the mind. That's certainly something the group of 44 artists behind Unseen Westeros, an art exhibition and accompanying book, would agree with.

Led by matte painter **Sven Sauer**, and involving many artists who have worked on the TV series over the years, the idea was born back in 2015. Their aim was to visualise the parts of George RR Martin's world that had been mentioned, but had not enjoyed realisation in the series.
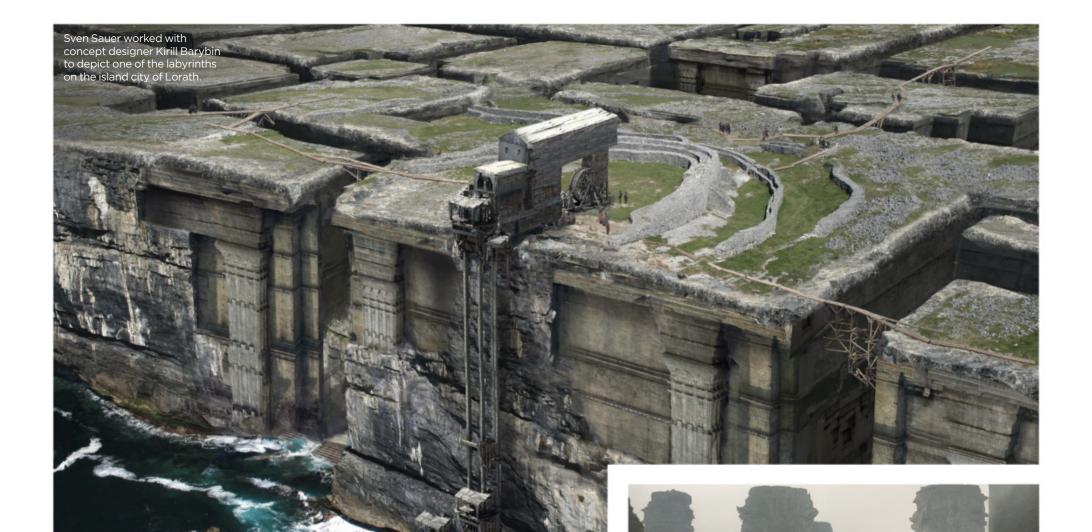
"We were working on season five of Game of Thrones," recalls Sven, and the book World of Ice and Fire had just come out, which tells the entire pre-

The free city of Norvos, as painted by Philipp Scherer, a concept artist and illustrator who's based in Berlin.

story of the world of the series." After two weeks he had 15 artists on board. Soon, the ranks swelled, boasting artists who had worked on successful video games titles like Horizon Zero Dawn as well as films such as Avatar.

"It wasn't easy getting people on board," admits Sven. "Many concept artists were booked up for the whole year, so to convince them to participate meant them cancelling paid jobs!" Normally, five to six concept artist work on a season of Game of Thrones, explains the artist. "You can imagine what a huge creative potential it was when all 40 artists came together!"

And it's fair to say that this enterprise has been a success. Over 16,000 people filed through the ▶▶
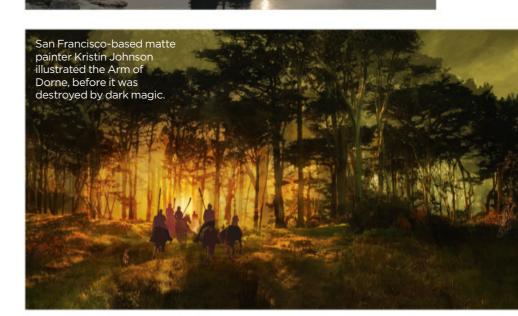
Sven Sauer worked with concept designer Kirill Barybin to depict one of the labyrinths on the island city of Lorath.

" The original idea was that we could pack all the paintings into a container and go wherever we wanted "

➤➤ doors of the Berlin exhibition in the first four days. The art book has hit its €25,000 Kickstarter goal, with over €80,000 to spare at time of going to press. And it's not over, either. "We plan to travel with the exhibition," says Sven. "The original idea was that we could pack all the paintings into a container and go wherever we wanted. We're already in discussions with other possible locations. So keep an eye on the website."

However, Sven admits that online is not the best way to see the contents of the exhibition, and the exquisite art that's contained within. "When displayed on a tablet or computer screen, the whole exhibition experience becomes very different and not as impressive as we had planned it," he says. "The paintings were painted big, at 6,000 pixels wide or more, so that we can have them printed out at a final size of 180x100cm. That's how we want them seen: either in real life, or as high-quality prints within the book."

So when Tyrion talks of the fall of ancient Valyria and you want a visual to accompany the fantastical images that appear in your head, visit the exhibition or buy a copy of the book. You can find out more details at **www.unseen-westeros.com**.

Matte painters Sven Sauer and Max Riess say, "In the series only a small ruin of Valeria was shown briefly. We want to reveal how gigantic this city must have been."

San Francisco-based matte painter Kristin Johnson illustrated the Arm of Dorne, before it was destroyed by dark magic.

MEET SOME OF THE ARTISTS FROM UNSEEN WESTEROS

Sven Sauer
Sven has been working as a matte painter for Game of Thrones since season two. He's helped to depict Harrenhal, Dragonstone, Dreadfort, Kings Landing, Qarth and many more locations from the show.

Tobias Mannewitz
Two-time Emmy-award winner Tobias has been a VFX concept artist on Game of Thrones since season two. He designed the look of Braavos, Deepwood Motte, Riverrun, Blackwater Bay, among other settings.

Floris Didden
Floris is a VFX concept artist, and joined production on Game of Thrones for season five. Oldtown, parts of the Citadel and Meereen are locations he's worked on.

This fearsome ice spider was painted by Jimmy Przemek Duda, a senior concept artist based in the Berlin office of VFX studio Trixter.

Tobias Mannewitz, a creative director at Karakter Design Studio, painted Greywater Watch, a castle that's built on a man-made floating island.

Eve Ventrue
Eve is a freelance artist based in Switzerland. She worked on season four as a matte painter. For the exhibition she painted The Grey King (left).

Rene Borst
Rene worked on seasons two, five and six of Game of Thrones. Among others locations, he developed the islands of Pyke.

Robert Simon
Emmy-award winner Robert has been part of the show since season five, working as a VFX concept artist on creature designs and dramatic action scenes.

Falk Boje
Falk has worked on Game of Thrones since season four. His projects include developing the Fist of the First Men hill fort.
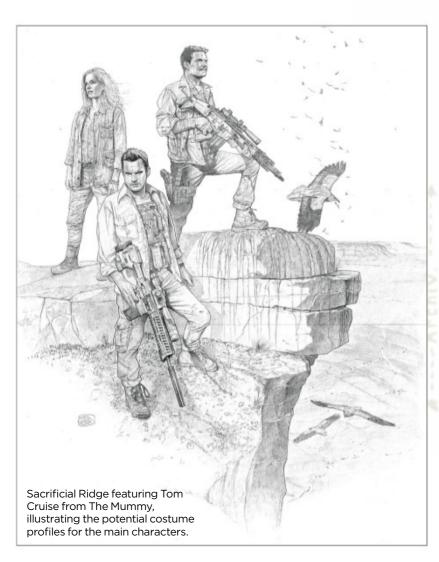
Darrell Warner

Dive in From Hollywood to the idyllic Cotswolds… this concept costume artist show us around his "waterside shed"

Sacrificial Ridge featuring Tom Cruise from The Mummy, illustrating the potential costume profiles for the main characters.
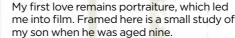
I bought my studio by a lake about nine years ago, having failed to attain planning permission to build a studio in my garden. Forced by the need for a separate workspace coupled with a growing family, my wife punched a search into Google and my present studio was one of the first properties to appear. Unbelievably, it's just a five-minute drive from home.

Admittedly, the studio is little more than a shed, being classified as a lodge that sits on the edge of an lake. Its southerly aspect means I tend to be bathed both by sunlight and reflections from the water. Initially, I didn't think this was ideal – at least from an artistic point of view – ➤➤

My first love remains portraiture, which led me into film. Framed here is a small study of my son when he was aged nine.

This collection ranges from bits of sculpture to skulls and seed heads. With the changing seasonal light I enjoy rearranging them to create 'mini' still-lifes.

Over the years I've collated various bits and pieces. This plan chest was a Westland Helicopter drawing office asset that was due to be dumped. I was glad to rescue it from an ignominious fate.

This display rack contains a variety of limited edition prints prepped ready for postage. Prints and cards are available through **www.seneciodigital.co.uk**.

Although I also do some work at an easel, my first choice is a drawing board with an anglepoise lamp. I like to keep a couple or more paintings on the go, such as this horse portrait.

I'm not one for having too many of my own paintings on the walls, but this self-portrait is a gentle reminder both of mortality and that time I took part in the Sky Arts Portrait Artist of the Year.

I find this long, thin oak table invaluable for setting out or reviewing work that's in progress.

My illustration portfolio open and ready for self-assessment. This is an exercise that I like to undertake either twice a year or whenever I'm meeting a prospective client.

Promotional literature and greetings cards stacked, ready to be sent out.

Finished costume watercolour illustration of Drosselmeyer, from Disney's recent film The Nutcracker and the Four Realms. Completed as part of costume designer Jenny Beavan's press junket.

I have a couple of bookcases that house an ever-increasing library of artists' literature as well as Society of Illustrators annuals, art-of film books and exhibition catalogues.

➤ but I've come to enjoy the interplay of light throughout the seasons.
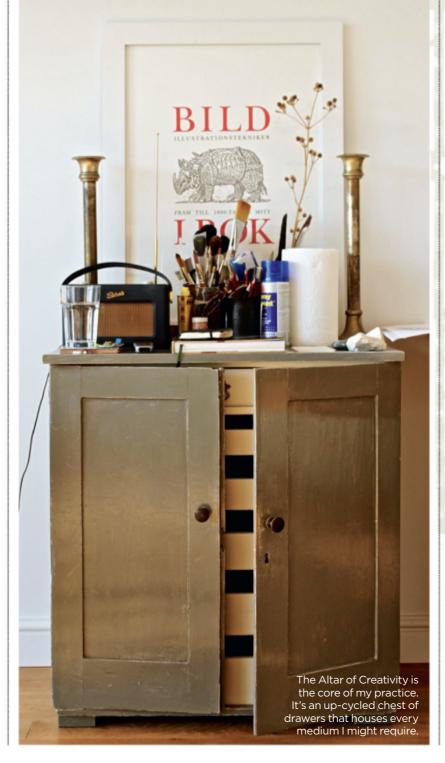
My studio setup is relatively basic. I work traditionally, so all my supplies are housed either in numerous plan chests or my Altar of Creativity. The latter is an old, up-cycled set of shallow drawers that house all my paints, pencils, pastels, and other media. It sits alongside my drawing board, but can be easily moved next to my easel.

My default tool are Winsor & Newton Pro Artists' watercolours with a handful of Gouache colours for body. I use Rosemary & Co. Series 99 No. 6 Sable brushes plus three larger brushes: a 12, 16 and a mop for expansive washes. Multiple grades of pencils and beautiful old tubes of oil paint that I inherited from my father, together with Unison Soft pastels, sit intimidatingly unused.

SEVENTH HEAVEN

I have no internet or TV. The space needs to be a creatively immersive environment, without distractions. My present studio is the seventh over my 35-year professional career and by far the best setup to date: it's calm, efficient and fit for purpose.

My work schedule can be full-on at times, so my average day is pretty regimented. I start between 8 and 8.30am, break for lunch around 1-2pm and finish up around 6pm. If I feel I've not achieved enough during the day I may work into the evening, too.

The Altar of Creativity is the core of my practice. It's an up-cycled chest of drawers that houses every medium I might require.
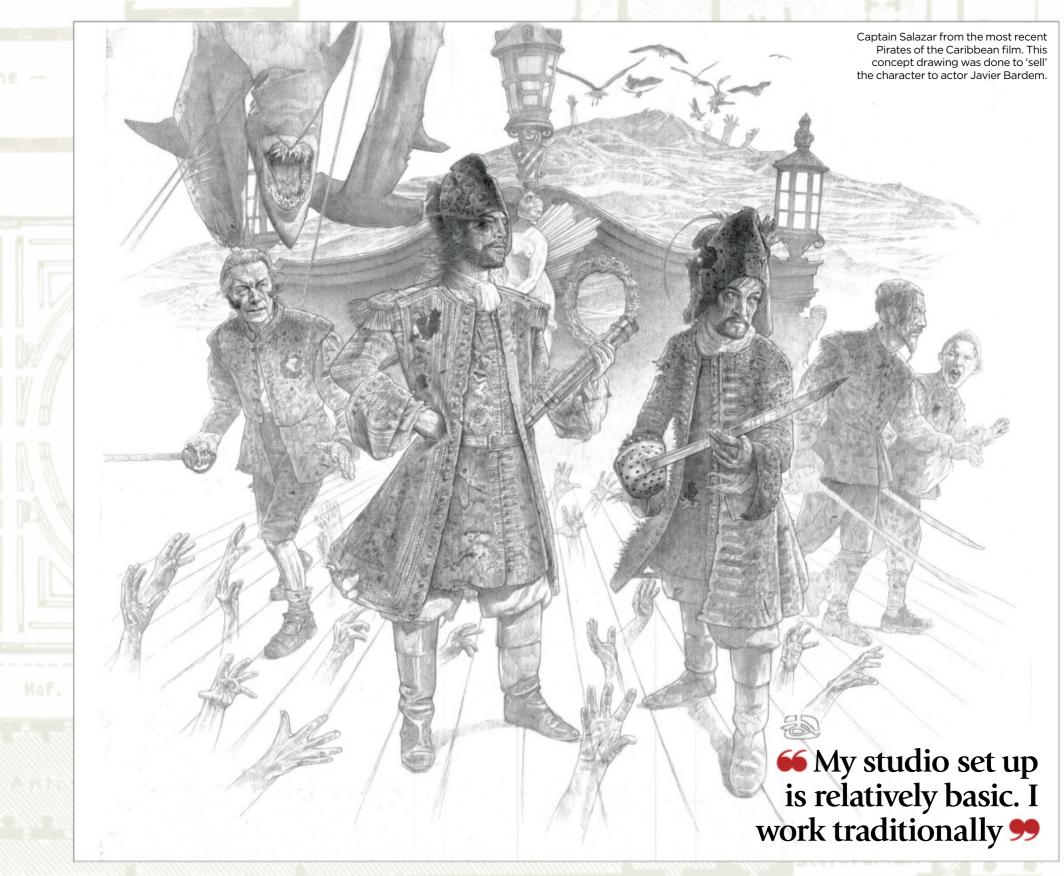
Following the release of the 2004's King Arthur, I curated a travelling exhibition of concept art and costumes from the film. It took in much of the UK and ran for just over two years. I still have a private view invitation sat within a bookcase.

Generally, film projects mean my workload is mapped out over a given period of time, but being present in the studio also enables me to develop a secondary level of 'blue sky conscience'. This is when I jot down my ideas for paintings in the form of notes and sketches. The result is endless thumbnails waiting to be developed into something more, for that time when I become free…
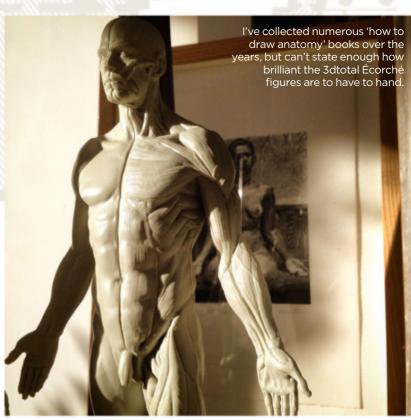
Traditionally trained artist and illustrator Darrell revels in the use of the humble pencil. He's developed a successful career creating film costume concepts. You can see his work at www.darrellwarner.co.uk.

Captain Salazar from the most recent Pirates of the Caribbean film. This concept drawing was done to 'sell' the character to actor Javier Bardem.

"My studio set up is relatively basic. I work traditionally"

This is a personal piece, replicating the continuity of composition from a series of paintings completed some years ago.

I've collected numerous 'how to draw anatomy' books over the years, but can't state enough how brilliant the 3dtotal Écorché figures are to have to hand.

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS

Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on claire@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, England

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Whole lotta love!

Thank you sooo much! I loved loved loved that you featured Audra Auclair! She's my favourite artist and I just love her! I follow her account avidly on Instagram and I just adore everything about her work. She also is very candid about her artistic struggles and how she can sometimes feel low. I personally find that very helpful as I sometimes feel like an imposter – not that I'm anywhere near her level. One day I would love to get good enough to be on your cover like Audra. Thanks again.
Sas, via email

Claire replies *Yes, we really love Audra too, and to make things even better she was an absolute joy to work with as well. I hope that you're able to deal with those negative thoughts. I try to recognise when my mind is being mean, rather than truthful. I try to stop comparing myself to others and on bad days I practise gratitude. I mentally list things that make me happy. I know it's not easy, but there are steps to take to hold back those grey clouds. Good luck Sas and thanks so much for your email.*

Look no further

I have tried to find my art style, so your feature on it last issue was a good read. I usually spend a lot of time trying to

We think we made reader Sas's year by featuring Audra Auclair as issue 171's cover artist.

DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE? Don't worry – you can still get hold of it. Visit **https://ifxm.ag/ifx-172**.

Issue 172's feature on finding your own art style inspired reader Jody to look back on her childhood influences.

copy my favourite artists. I'm not ashamed to admit this, and don't worry, I don't try to pass of their work off as my own or anything. My aim is to break down how they work and also find out why I like their art so much.

Anyway, I'm waffling… what I liked about the artists in your feature was that their style didn't come to them in a lightening strike. It was more gentle. For some, they seemed to recognise the things they liked from culture – especially from their formative years – and hone in on that. I think you called it 'honouring your influences' in the feature. So now I'm going to delve back into things I used to love in my childhood and create art from this. I'm not going searching for my style – I'll keep on creating until it finds me!
Jody, via email

Claire replies *Hello Jody, yes I really enjoyed that feature too. I believe that your style is already inside of you. You just need to put yourself in the position to find it. Keeping on creating is a great start. Good luck!*

Where are you ImagineFX?

I can never find you in my local store! I'm in Canada!
Dan Gettings, via email

That's a short but sweet email, Dan! We're so sorry you can't find us. It's so frustrating when we receive messages like this… I don't know specifically which stores stock ImagineFX in Canada, but I know we used to be in Chapters Indigo. We're on sale in over 30 countries, but only in relatively small numbers in comparison to the population! For info: readers in the US, your best bet is Barnes & Noble as most of our export stock gets sent there; in the UK it's WH Smith or Tesco; in Ireland it's Eason & Son. We also deliver to over 100 countries for both single issues and subscriptions at our online shop: www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk. We're also available as digital editions via Apple Newsstand, Google Play, Amazon and Zinio – see page 35 for more information.

FRESH PAINT

New works that have grabbed our attention

Italo Freitas
@ludus.art

Sofia Fett
@sofiafettart

Kila Zamana
@nullight

If you've created art that you want us to shout about simply tag us on Twitter or Instagram, or find us on Facebook!

Artist Portfolio
ANTHONY FRANCISCO

The artist who's worked on Black Panther, Thor: Ragnarok, and Guardians of the Galaxy tells **Gary Evans** why Marvel Studios is more than just a job

Anthony Francisco is trying to find the words to answer this question: beyond top-notch art skills, what does it take to work as a vis-dev artist at Marvel Studios? "Kindness?" the Filipino says. "Kindness is too simple a word… Professionalism? No… respect – a respectful manner? That's not it."

Anthony's worked at Marvel for six years. He designed Okoye, Nakia and the Dora Milaje for Black Panther, Loki for Thor: Ragnarok, and Baby Groot for Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2. Being a good at art is important, but not as important as you might imagine. You need to have ideas, but know how to see an idea through. You need to be a skilled designer, but know how to efficiently explain your design decisions. One word neatly sums up this side of the job: "Craftsmanship."

Craftsmanship alone isn't enough. A good craftsman will be replaced if they don't have this other thing, this certain trait, this specific quality: "Personality," Anthony says, but he's not happy with

Artist PROFILE

Anthony Francisco
LOCATION: US
FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Hayao Miyazaki, Katsuya Terada, Dean Cornwell, Leyendecker brothers, Craig Mullins, Kim Jung Gi, Norman Rockwell, Yasushi Nirasawa, Alexander McQueen, Adam Hughes, John Singer Sargent
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, ZBrush, Keyshot
WEB: https://ifxm.ag/anthony-instagram

MORDO
"This was one of my favourite versions of his costume. I was trying to show a sense of ancient wisdom, using the weaving to try to reflect that he's a multi-layered and complicated character."

that either. "The way you interact? Are you easy to work with? So, people skills, maybe…"

FULLY FORMED WORLDS
As a kid in Quezon City, Anthony would avoid certain streets on the walk home from school because they were known as places where you might find dead bodies. Filipino dictator, Marcos, executed people without trial and dumped corpses where they would be seen. Art became Anthony's escape.

He couldn't play outside. He didn't have toys. So he'd stay indoors and draw superheroes, cut them out, and use them as action figures. Five, six years old, a friend introduced him to Marvel comics. Hulk was a favourite, and X-Men, especially Wolverine. The big revelation was realising these characters lived in fully formed

> 66 **You need to be a skilled designer, but know how to explain your decisions** 99

BATTLE ON THE RAINBOW BRIDGE
"This action scene was a complicated one. Producers needed to see how Thor would use lightning to battle Hela's minions."

GLADIATOR HULK
"Hulk was one of my favourite characters growing up. I had a lot of fun with this one, making the shoulder piece sing with a lot of Jack Kirby inspiration."

worlds, a hero for every villain, complex backgrounds and backstories. These were dangerous places you could safely explore.

By high school, Anthony was watching lots of sci-fi and horror films on Betamax. He'd draw his own versions of what he saw. His mother, very religious, became worried about her son's obsession with demons and devils. "I'm just making up stories," Anthony says. "Now I have to talk to a priest to make sure I'm not possessed. My mom would tell ghost stories, Filipino folklore, but that was okay."

At the University of Santo Tomas, Anthony studied architecture and fine arts. He didn't learn a lot. His art got going when he discovered the instructional art books by Andrew Loomis, but Anthony and his family moved to the US before he could finish his university course.

He decided to join the US Navy, and save enough money to buy his family a house. He asked to enlist in the art department, fancying himself as a draftsman, and to be stationed on the west coast. The navy stationed him on the east coast as a boatswain's mate. "That's the technical term for it. The general term for it is seaman. But there's a lot of poking fun of that, seamen."

Anthony cleaned the ship, painted the walls… general maintenance, basically. Looking back, he didn't make the most of his time in the Navy. He could have taken advantage of all the

> ❝ You have to be prepared when the opportunity arises. I wasn't quite prepared ❞
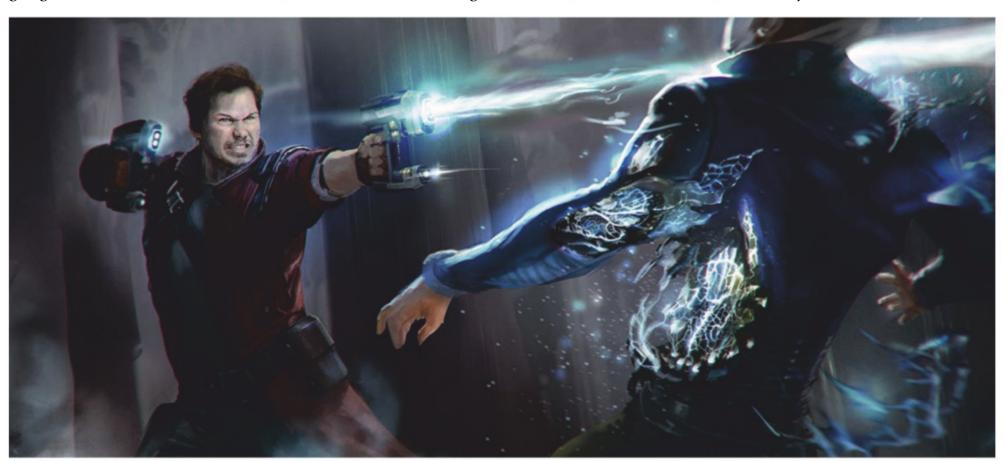
reference surrounding him. There was a tour of Europe he should have used to go painting in France. Still, he wouldn't change a thing. Anthony left the Navy after a couple of years: doing something he didn't want to do gave him the drive to pursue a career in art.

STAR LORD
"Going from collecting the Guardians of the Galaxy comics as a kid to painting concepts of the lead characters was quite a thrill!"

NO PORTFOLIO

After the navy, Anthony took art classes around California. He particularly enjoyed Associates in Art in Van Nuys. Some of the teachers

DRESSING A GOD OF MISCHIEF

Anthony explains the design decision behind the new-look Loki in Thor: Ragnarok… and the unlikely influence that Mr T from the A-Team had on the character's look

"This is the design journey I had based on what Loki was going to do in the third Thor film. Story is really important to me. His costume is asymmetrical because he's unbalanced by the death of his father Odin, and he doesn't know if he's good or bad, but he's trying be good, so all the diagonal lines reflect this inner turmoil.

I wanted to use my own ideas and sensibility to new costumes that feel like they belong on the trash planet of Sakaar. Loki had to look tougher, more regal, like a warrior, and not so androgynous, with his armour also echoing Asgardian motifs.

Initially, the little pendant was a lot bigger, like a chain worn by a rapper, a big L for Loki, something that would be a big centrepiece. Then I was thinking he could have jewellery all over like Mr T – to me, Mr T is iconic. Obviously it didn't end up looking anything like Mr T, but that's how my mind works sometimes.

The helmet is my favourite style of helmet from the comic books, that's open at the top so you can see the hair. This looked more Norse at one point, but I decided he still had to feel like the Loki from first two movies.

For Loki's Sakaar look I did a bunch of colour passes before we settled on the blue and yellow version. I also did turnarounds so the costume designer had clear direction. People think we don't think of design all the way round to the back, but we do!"

there worked as pros in the entertainment industry. There was even a class on creature design: "I was like, You can draw monsters and get paid for it?"

After class one day, Anthony's friend got talking to Alec Gillis, co-founder of special effect company Amalgamated Dynamics, Inc. Alec saw Anthony listening intently. Alec asked if Anthony if he'd like to come to the studio with his portfolio. Anthony said he's very much like that. Problem was: he didn't have a portfolio.
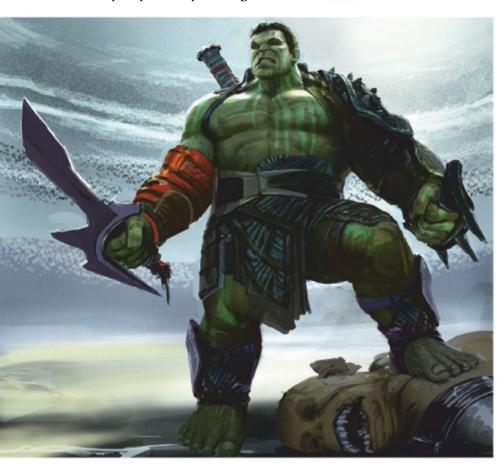
"You have to be prepared when the opportunity arises. I wasn't quite prepared. But that wasn't going to deter me. I decided: I'll just keep on drawing every day, all day, all night, till four ➡

INFINITY GAUNTLET VARIATION
"Here I'm trying out some other looks for the design for the Infinity Gauntlet."

GREEN ON GREEN
"I was testing out different war paint ideas for this design of Hulk, developed by Ryan Meinerding, head of visual development at Marvel Studios."

HELMET DESIGN
"I loved redesigning Loki's helmet. I had to do a lot of notes and even a turnaround to clearly explain what I was thinking."

➦ in the morning, just keep on drawing until I have enough to show."

Anthony could tell Alec wasn't particularly impressed with the results. The art looked clean enough, but Alec's face said there was something missing, so he asked to see Anthony's sketchbook. Anthony had two with him: the drawings were very sketchy, but full of ideas, lots of notes, lots of trying stuff out. He'd drawn a werewolf over and over – bigger head, smaller head, longer muzzle, shorter muzzle. He'd drawn stuff based on Men in Black, images he'd developed so much you could no longer see the source. He'd drawn and redrawn a weird alien that ended up growing a

❝ Sometime I just have to pinch myself. It's the dream job ❞

mechanical arm. The sketchbooks showed Anthony's shape, his language.

At ADI, Anthony worked on 2002's Spider-Man, Alien vs. Predator and several other box-office successes. This was just the start.

INSIDE MARVEL

Anthony's now part of the permanent visual development team at Marvel Studios. That means he and his team work continuously on the Marvel cinematic universe. He's on multiple films at the same time – often before the studio has a director or a script. Anthony was busy with Avengers: Infinity War (2018) when he got the chance to work on Black Panther – two titles that ended up being among the most successful films of all time. "It's crazy. Sometime I just have to pinch myself. It's the dream job."

Typically, head of visual development Ryan Meinerding is the team's "touchstone," the person who relays messages between the artists and the directors and producers. A similar role is played by Andy Park, director of visual development at Marvel Studios. Anthony says the Marvel cinematic universes gets a lot of its look, its "sensibilities," from Ryan and Andy's art style. But that doesn't mean there's no room for personal expression.

Take Ego (played by Kurt Russell in Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2). This was a particularly difficult ➦

DOCTOR STRANGE
"Very early stab on a direction for Doctor Strange's iconic look. Karla Ortiz designed the final look you see on-screen."

DORMAMMU
"It was fun trying to come up with my take on this demon, while echoing some of Steve Ditko's unmistakable trippy shapes for the dark dimension."

BULLET ANT
"I learned so much about ants while on this project. I would work while watching every ant documentary that I could get hold of."

GLADIATOR THOR
"Exploring ideas of Thor's costume, trying to get him looking more like the Norse god of thunder."

LIKE A LIONESS IN THE SERENGETI

Anthony talks about his most famous creation: the Dora Milaje team of warriors from Black Panther

"I was busy working on Avengers: Infinity War when I got the opportunity to contribute to Black Panther. I designed the Dora Milaje that director Ryan Coogler and costume designer Ruth E Carter brought to life in the movie.

I love comic books and so most of my suggestions were based on the rich source material. When I started working on the film Ryan was confirmed as the director, but Ruth was yet to join the production team. I had to work on character designs based on descriptions of scenes.

I wanted the women to look fierce and definitely not scantily clad. I had this idea of a lioness hunting in the Serengeti, standing up on a rock, surveying her land, getting ready to attack her prey. That gave me warm colours, yellows and oranges and reds.

After head of visual development Ryan Meinerding took my designs into the first pitch, the discussion opens up to other members of the team and the producers of the movie, and there are changes and little things added on. "Okay, let's try red. Let's try this. Let's try more African patterns and get even more of a tribal feel." Overall, that's kind of the process.

OKOYE WEAPONS
"I wanted to show the general in a fighting stance and also to work out the costume in a more dynamic pose."

It comes back to me and I make those changes.

I had a blue version, a version with white stripe, more multicoloured. They ended up sticking on my initial yellow, that feeling of a lionesses hunting. But when my design doesn't get through, I'm okay with that. I understand it's not what they want so I try something else. You have to take criticism positively.

I heard Ryan Coogler really liked the final design. I didn't get to go to that meeting, so the head of the team relayed these messages. But hopefully I'll be in those meetings one day."

DORA MILAJE TRIBAL WARRIOR
"I wanted to apply some of the Massai elements to this design of the Dora Milaje."

DORA MILAJE WARRIOR
"Testing out other shapes and layering inspired by Zulu warriors and weapons."

" I had this idea of a lioness hunting in the Serengeti, up on a rock, surveying her land, getting ready to attack her prey "

DORA MILAJE FINAL
"There's a lot of symbolism in this image. Okoye is a traditionalist, very balanced and unwavering like a rock and she's on a rock, while Nakia is more adventurous. Okoye's shoulder armour is symmetrical for balance and Nakia is A-symmetrical to symbolise her rebellious nature. Even the shape of their weapons echo their personality."

TWEEN GROOT
"I'm always using reference when I can. Capturing my son in this pose was just priceless."

VALKYRIE
"A more Norse-looking version of the character. The final design was by Constantine Sekeris."

character to design. The team, headed up by Andy, received the brief, then it was "all hands on deck," and everybody came up with designs. Anthony tried to balance doing what the producers wanted with his own personal tastes, which is usually "going really far – like, weird far." He came up with five designs and took them to the meeting where the team compared work and received notes. From there, Andy guides the refining of the idea until it looks right.

"Even if your design isn't chosen, you still did your job by letting them know that's not the direction they want to go. Process of elimination."

Most people hadn't heard of Guardians of the Galaxy when

SURTUR DESIGN OPTIONS
"Exploring the balance between the molten rock on Surtur's body. The final design was by Aleksi Briclot."

> ❝ Even if your design isn't chosen, you still did your job by letting them know that's not the direction they want to go ❞

Anthony started work on the film. However, he'd collected the comics as a kid. Anthony insists you have to be a comic book nerd to do his job. First, it wouldn't be interesting if you weren't seriously into it, and, second, you need to have an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of a film's source – the comics.

When Anthony doesn't get to see the full script – to prevent leaks – he has to come up with ideas based a scene or scene description. On Infinity War, he

was told to come up with "an epic battle" between Thanos and Dr Strange. He says Marvel's way of working is so open and collaborative that an artist's design can have a direct influence on the final script.

THE WORD ESCAPES ME
Anthony Francisco is still trying to find the right words to answer this question: beyond top-notch art skills, what does it take to work as a vis-dev artist at Marvel Studios?

ANT-TONY
"Designing a retro-looking ant, but he needed to feel like a bike. I used ZBrush and Keyshot for the ant design."

"People skills… That doesn't mean doing whatever people want. It means you're open to working in a collaborative manner. And respectfully. Show respect, get respect… I don't know. The word escapes me."

Maybe the questions threw him off because of the word "work." Talk to Anthony about Marvel and you see it's more than just a job. The Dora Milaje's costumes are inspired by mainly by African culture, southeast Asian tribes, Native Americans, samurai and the Ifugao people from the Philippines. Baby Groot was modelled on his children. Marvel is part of his life, and has been since he was a kid. Anthony finds the word that defines a success in entertainment art: "Longevity."

He's been involved in the industry for nearly 20 years now. The film's he's been part of have made billions of dollars. But he never mentions that. He's in it for the making of fully formed worlds, a hero for every villain. Anthony makes dangerous places you can safely explore. ●

HULK VS FENRIS
"This keyframe was to help visualise the size difference and how cool their battle could look."

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Our manga issue has gorgeous cover art by Asia Ladowska, an interview with US illustrator Sachin Teng, 15 tips for improving your creature designs, and a reimagination of Asuka from Neon Genesis Evangelion.

Issue 171
March 2019
Audra Auclair creates our compelling cover art in Procreate. You'll also get composition and anatomy advice, plus we explore ways to avoid a creative crash, talk to VR guru Goro Fujita, and pore over Loish's sketchbook.

Issue 170
February 2019
Get better at telling stories with your art, with pro advice from cover artist Jon Foster and Abigail Larson. We explain how to make your time on Patreon a success, and interview illustrators Scott M Fischer and Phil Hale.

Issue 169
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An exclusive look at the art for Sable, we learn what recruiters want from game artists, visit Polish studio CD Projekt Red – home of The Witcher series and Cyberpunk 2077 – and talk to Halo lead artist Darren Bacon.

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Sketchbook

Jama Jurabaev

The aerospace engineer-turned-concept artist presents a collection of sketches done for a range of personal and professional projects

Artist PROFILE

Jama Jurabaev
LOCATION: England

Tajikistan-born Jama now lives and works in London. He graduated as an aerospace engineer back in 2004, but recently decide to pursue his dream to become an artist. Jama's worked as a concept artist on a range of blockbuster films including Kong: Skull Island, Jurassic World 2, Ready Player One, Doctor Strange, Avengers: Age of Ultron and King Arthur: Legend of the Sword.
www.jamajurabaev.com

THE MEETING
"This was an experiment in which I tried to balance the amount of texture in my strokes. I wanted to create an illusion of details, rather than having to paint them in."
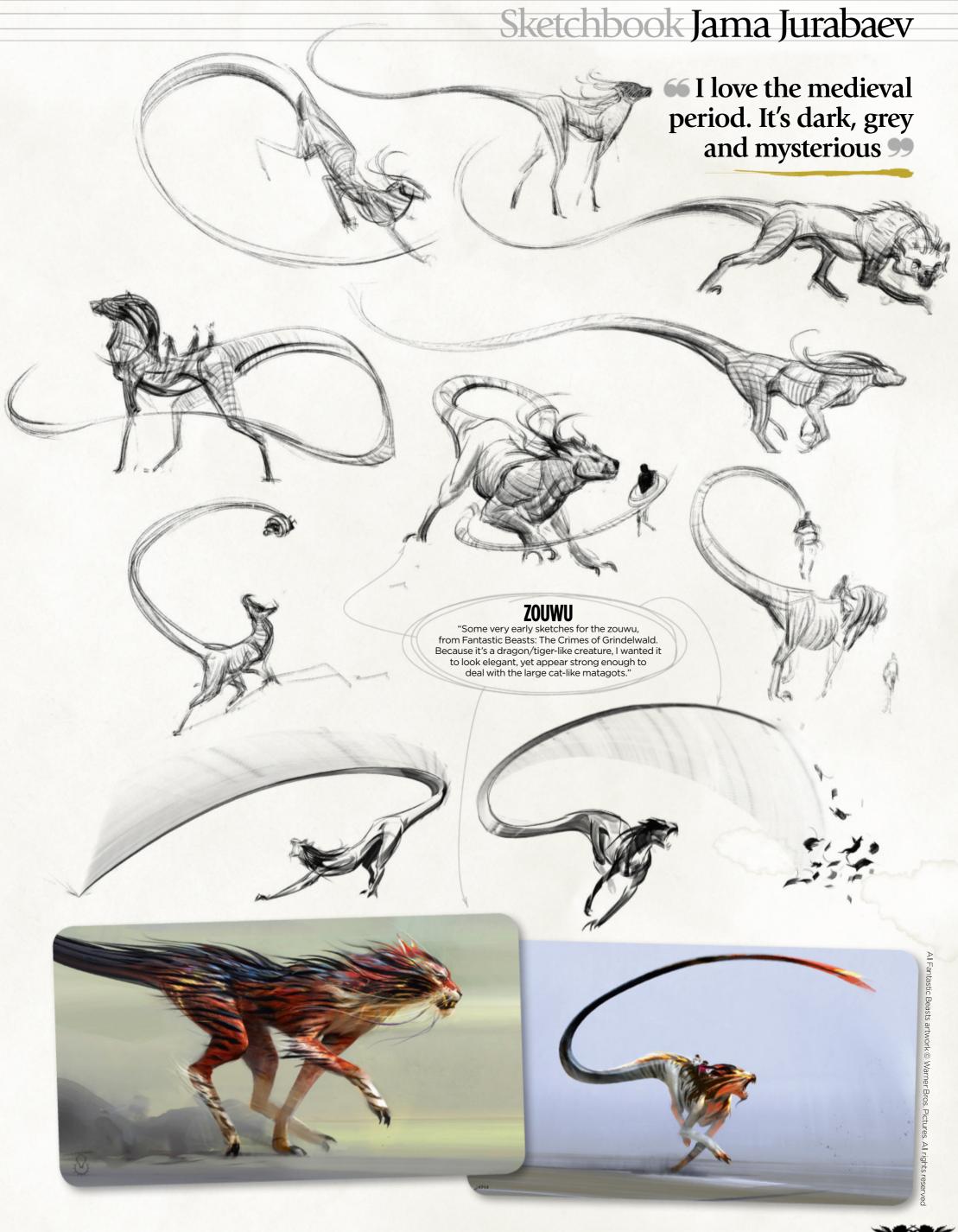
DARK AGED II
"Sketches are a key part of my creative process – they enable me to convey an idea very quickly."

❝ **I love the medieval period. It's dark, grey and mysterious** ❞

ZOUWU

"Some very early sketches for the zouwu, from Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald. Because it's a dragon/tiger-like creature, I wanted it to look elegant, yet appear strong enough to deal with the large cat-like matagots."

SCI-FI CITY
"This was another grease pencil exploration done in Blender."
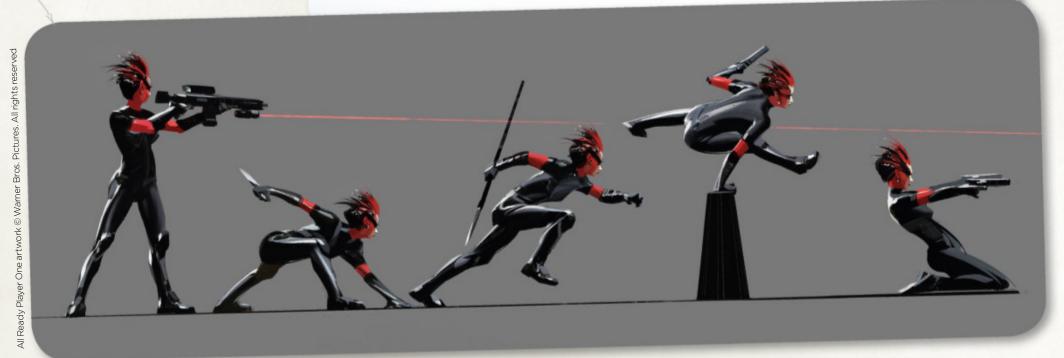
KELPI
"My early ideas for these watery creatures from Fantastic Beasts. I was trying to find a balance between a real horse and a strong fantasy design."

❝ I was trying to find a balance between a real horse and a strong fantasy design ❞

ART3MIS
"These sketches show this strong female character in action. She can fight and she can race!"

I-ROK

"This the first character that I designed for Ready Player One. Everything about this character was supposed to be over the top. Big guns, crazy armour. I enjoy experimenting with ideas using only lines and basic shapes."

Sketchbook

GREASE PENCIL
"Here's one of the experiments I did in Blender, which enables you to use 3D software like a sketching tool."

66 It's all about action here and sketches are probably the best way to deliver it 99

PELUDA
"Early explorations for the peluda from Fantastic Beasts. This creature never made it to the final cut, which happens quite often on a film production."

DRAWING
"One of my daily exercises where I practise drawing forms."

METROPOLIS
A very quick idea for Metropolis, which was later cut from the film."

JURASSIC WORLD FIGHT
"A scene depicting a dramatic moment. It's all about action here and sketches are probably the best way to deliver it."

Do you want to share your sketches with your fellow ImagineFX readers? Send us an email with a selection of your art, captions for each piece and a photo and bio of yourself to **sketchbook@imaginefx.com**

MIKE HILL

Gary Evans find this artist enhances his concepts
using story theory, engineering and psychology

The Mike Hill method for watching films in three simple(ish) steps: first, pick a movie and watch it. Second, if the movie moved you in some way, don't just go 'Yes, that was nice' and leave it at that; watch it again, slowly, carefully, scene by scene. And, three, take the movie into a video editor, cut it up, colour-code the acts, the sequences, the scenes, really get in there, pick it apart, look at the story from all angles, and try to understand the decisions made by the scriptwriter, the director, the editor, even the colour grader. The Mike Hill method for watching movies is about seeing "how the story looks from 30,000 feet."

This is how the British artist likes to do things – all things, it seems… He was emailed some interview questions. Mike wanted to know precisely how long his answers should be, if we could

give him feedback once he'd sent them, and if we could establish an iterative process to make sure his responses were perfectly clear. We asked Mike to share some pictures of his work. Mike politely requested a proposed layout for the article, showing the images we'd like to use and how we'd like to use them, which he would then review, and, if necessary, make substitutions.

Looking at how Mike approaches those two everyday things – watching a movie, answering an email – and you get a good idea of how Mike ➤➤

> 66 **Watching movies is all about seeing how the story looks from 30,000 feet** 99

GAUNTLET
"Truck designs for a Dakar-style rally for Bongfish's game, Gauntlet. Future technology with a grounding in reality."

➤➤ approaches concept work on big-name franchises (Game of Thrones, Blade Runner 2049, Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare). He has a deep desire to understand how things work now and how they might work better later. He wants everything to be logical, everything structurally sound and functioning right.
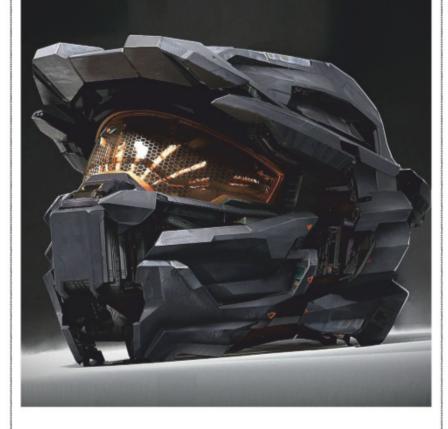
You should also be able to predict the kind of response we'd receive after asking Mike a careless question like this: what separates good concept art from great concept art?

"I would argue," Mike says, "the question should be: what separates concept art from concept design?"

WHAT WAS "RIGHT"

Growing up, Mike drew dinosaurs, copied game box art, liked car and aircraft design. He believes by regularly looking at lots of imagery he gained an "unconscious understanding of what was 'right' from a visual engineering point of view." He started a college

Artist PROFILE

Mike Hill
LOCATION: Budapest
FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Craig Mullins, Eddie Smith and Francis Tsai
SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop, 3ds Max
WEB: www.mikehill.design

animation course, but dropped out after a few months. By then, he was focused specifically on sci-fi art and capable of teaching himself at home using online guides and reference books. He got into Photoshop and 3D software after seeing work by digital artists like Craig Mullins and the late Francis Tsai. Around this time, 2004, Mike started playing first-person shooter Halo: Combat Evolved. He became mesmerised by the Silent Cartographer level, set on a creepy

SPARTAN
"An animated redesign for Halo's Spartan helmet. The idea was that the design would lock into the closed position, allowing space for the head to enter and giving associations of loading a weapon."

> ❝ I gained an understanding of what looked visually 'right' ❞

paradise island. He looked up the concept art online. This was something he wanted to do: build worlds.

Mike's first job in art, he designed "corporate branding and interior design concepts" for nightclubs in his hometown of Southampton. He wasn't building worlds, but it was a start. After dropping out of college, he and a friend made of successful business of it, these smaller, local jobs helping them hone their skills – work that would eventually lead to clients like Sony and Netflix. His first job in entertainment art, 2007, Mike worked as a 3D asset modeller and texture artist for Amsterdam video game developer Streamline Studios. Here Mike met his future business partners: Henrik Bolle, Floris Didden and Tobias Mannewitz.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Karakter Design Studio started out in a co-working space under train tracks near Amsterdam Centraal station. As a small group of four, the artists ➤➤

SHADOW FALL
"A dropship design for Killzone Shadow Fall. I created a hybrid dropship that employs the principles of a V-22 Osprey and an AH-64 Apache, while still being uniquely Killzone."
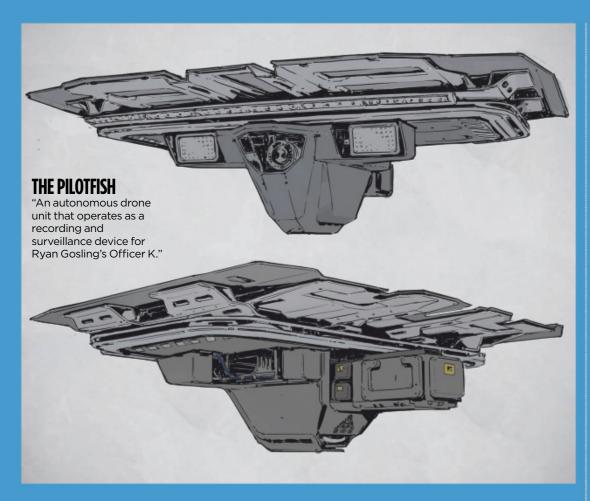

VEKTA CITY STATION
"For Killzone Shadow Fall, Guerrilla wanted a train station that tapped into contemporary architecture and offered a utopian vision of ISA's home planet."

VEHICLE TESTS
"Testing workflows for vehicle designs, starting with splines to establish a framework for a design, then extruding surfaces, rendering and overpainting."

THE PILOTFISH
"An autonomous drone unit that operates as a recording and surveillance device for Ryan Gosling's Officer K."
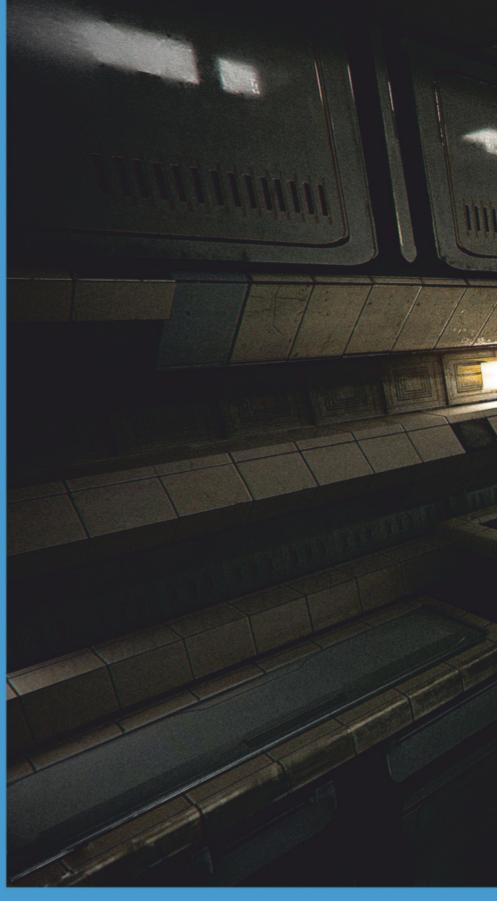
REDESIGNING A CULT CLASSIC

Mike talks through some of the concept design decisions that he took while working on Blade Runner 2049

"I got involved with Blade Runner in January 2016 in the pre-production stage of development. The script was fully developed conceptually, so my briefs consisted of story context combined with production designer Dennis Gassner articulating the feeling he wanted to elicit from the sets and the various props and devices that the script was describing.

Once the feeling was delivered, my job was to synthesise designs from scratch that operated both logically and emotionally. I was given a blank canvas and could design everything from scratch with just the script's initial descriptions.

When starting a concept art commission I'll begin by considering what the design needs to communicate to the audience. Then, with that in mind, I'll simultaneously weigh up what ph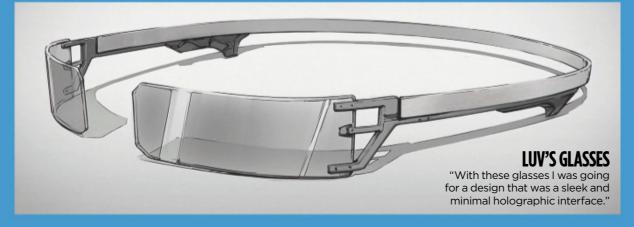ysical and mechanical requirements will be necessary for the design to be realistic and functional. This enables me to ping-pong in my mind quick iterative cycles of design and test different configurations to see which feels right intuitively.

I'll do simple 3D blockouts in 3ds Max, getting major structural elements into place. I'll create animations that will describe the mechanical functioning of the design. This allows the design to "express" itself, even in raw and untextured form. This stage is important, because without it the structural ideas could become arbitrary.
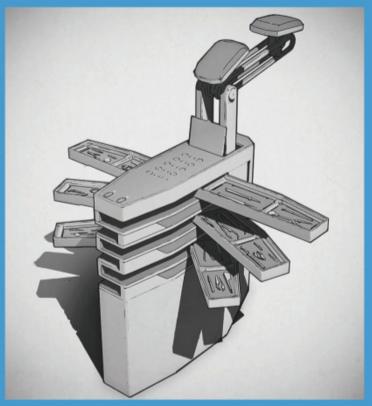
With the animated model in place, I'll run some animations past the director (on Blade Runner most of my deliverables were actually animations, not concepts). The director will be able to see the behaviour of the design, which is much more important than the aesthetic finish. This means there isn't a concern for endless

K'S APARTMENT
"Another space that was intended to be minimal, to support the scarcity that existed in the world of 2049."

K'S KITCHEN
"Inspired by the iconic original kitchen, but taking the design into a colder, more brutalism-influenced future."

LUV'S GLASSES
"With these glasses I was going for a design that was a sleek and minimal holographic interface."

variations: if it works, it works, and so and the process of making the design look appealing can begin.

I'll do some quick UV unwraps of the model I've mocked up, create simple texture concepts and then render them out, either from the viewport screenshot (sometimes simple is better) and paintover. Alternatively, if the design needs real polish, I'll get it into Corona Renderer and get some physical renders out to clarify material treatments."

THE MEMORY ORB
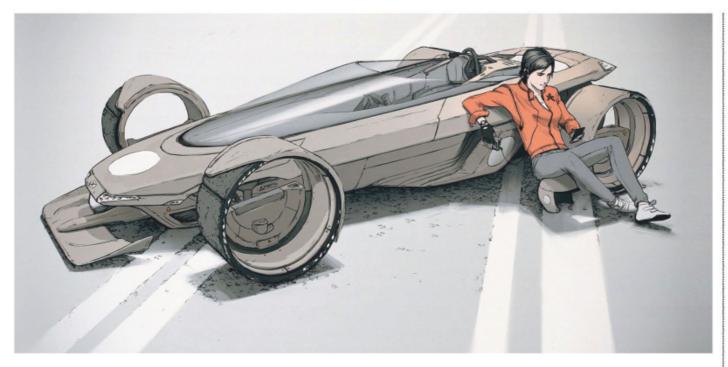"This is a production title for the object that Dr Stelline uses to create dream memories for replicants."

MANICURE TRAY
"An oriental-inspired piece of hardware to operate as a service station for a future manicurist."

ANIME ROADSTER
"Inspired by the feeling of classic Japanese anime, I decided to create a design and illustrate it in a more eastern-inspired style."

found work easier to come by. They complemented each other, not just artistically, but in doing all the other stuff that goes into setting up a studio: branding, scheduling, accounting, and just being organised.

In 2010, Karakter moved to Berlin and a bigger studio for a bigger client list, and a year later worked on concepts for Killzone 3, developed by another Amsterdam developer, Guerrilla Games. It's a collaboration that continues to this day. However, in 2013 Mike decided it was time to leave. He was in Los Angeles for a while and now lives a "nomadic lifestyle" in Europe.

"Managing and growing a studio didn't leave much time to be creative. I made the decision with the other guys to restructure the studio so I would be able to continue expanding my interests in design and psychology."
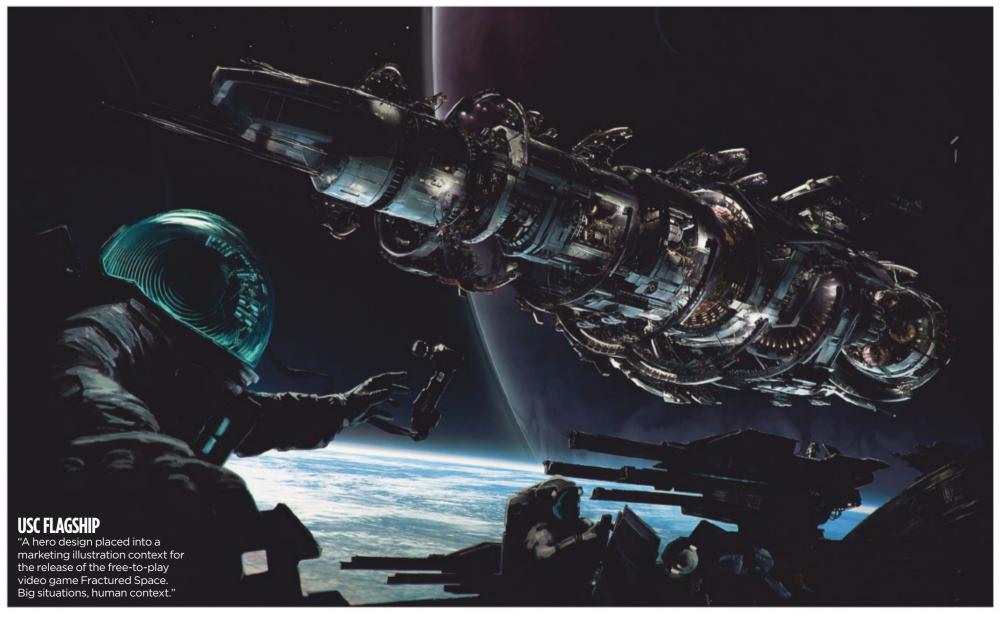
THE MONOMYTH
How does a film look from 30,000 feet? If it's any good, the decisions made by the scriptwriter, the director, the editor, and even the colour grader, will be linked to "a central structure." This structure is set out in a hugely influential book: The Hero with a Thousand Faces. Author Joseph Campbell said that, throughout history, all the best stories have shared a fundamental structure. The theory of the "hero's journey" – the monomyth – has influenced everyone from Stanley Kubrick to the makers of Magic: The Gathering. Understand the monomyth and you'll understand stories.

"There's a massive misunderstanding about creativity, especially with storytelling," says Mike. "Ultimately there's an unbelievably powerful logic to a story's construction, a thick tapestry of interlocking causes and effects at every level. Through its delivery, through the sensory overload of a movie, when all those interlocking elements overlap and intertwine, we, thankfully, fail to see the logical structure and will summarise it as an emotionally artistic experience.

"But, as Mad Max director George Miller said: 'Most of what we see in the world has hidden architecture.' And that hidden architecture is extremely logical." Interesting stuff, so how does all this benefit your art?

USC FLAGSHIP
"A hero design placed into a marketing illustration context for the release of the free-to-play video game Fractured Space. Big situations, human context."

KILLZONE HANGAR
"This was a full mock-up for a level design for Killzone Shadow Fall. This piece was to sell the mood and tone of the space: ships being suspended on racks for launch."

"Aesthetics are never an initial factor when I'm considering a design," Mike says. "That's a bit like thinking about cosmetic makeup before you've sculpted a head." He begins a concept by analysing what the design needs – often while walking or running. In his head, he tests various designs to see what feels right. "This feeling is always the sum total of lots of logical ideas syncing up, rather than some esoteric hippy-dippy creative feeling."

He knows how the design will look by the time he starts simple blockouts

> ❝ This feeling is always the sum total of lots of logical ideas ❞

in 3ds Max. Then he makes animations that "describe the mechanical function of the design." This stage is important. Without it, structural choices are meaningless. He needs to know the design works literally before thinking about how it works symbolically.

Mike believes the audience will know by looking at it whether or not the design is right, even it they can't say exactly why it might be wrong. He animates in the concept stage to avoid

problems later on. For now, how it works is far more important than how it looks. It needs to be "realistic and function." A desk need to be a desk.

A LACK OF FUNCTION

Mike elaborates: "I notice this a lot when looking at mechanical design online: often it's clear to me that the designs have been modelled in great detail. But, having spent a lot of time doing rigging and animation, the sheer

MADAM'S DESK
"A Blade Runner 2049 design showing a multi-layered, highly dense workspace. Inspiration taken from the original film."

lack of function jumps off the screen. The design simply won't work."

If he's working on a film, Mike will show the animation to the director so they can see the design's "behaviour." Now the concept artist can start to make it look cool. He does quick UV unwraps – unfolding the model, which enables him to create a 2D texture to fit the 3D object – then moves it into Corona Renderer, if the design needs "real polish." ➤➤

WHEN DUTY CALLS

Mike on how the most satisfying moment of his career enable him to combine his two loves: design and stories

"Perhaps my most interesting project was designing the Retribution level design for Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare. I don't think I've had any clear moments of breakthrough in my career. There are moments where a design begins to come together and everything clicks, but I think in general that creative development is much more of a slow-burn situation without the spectacle of 'Eureka!' moments. That's been my experience, at least.

The challenge on Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare was a multi-dimensional problem: designing a complex hub level that needed to satisfy game mechanics and narrative across a huge single-player campaign. This gave me the chance to stretch all my capabilities as a designer at the same time.

I did have several points in that process where I was in a flow state, considering all the various design considerations at the same time. That was very satisfying, to see 10 years of experience begin to come together as part of one dense design challenge."

THE RAVEN – INTERORBITAL DROPSHIP
"I created this design with Raven Software, for Call of Duty: Infinite War."

BRIDGE MOOD PIECE
"A quick overpaint to sell a level design layout for the bridge design."

UNSC JACKAL
"A complex interorbital, vertical take-off and landing fighter jet. The engineering behind this design was pretty complex."

RETRIBUTION
"Overview of the UNSC Retribution, a space carrier for the protagonist fleet in Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare."

underlying structure of a design. I believe that the most "successful" artists and designers are the ones who approach a design or artwork holistically, bringing a range of disciplines together. The different disciplines make up supportive legs – like a tripod that can hold a lot of weight because it distributes that weight evenly."

CONCEPT ART VS CONCEPT DESIGN

So, our final question, corrected, no longer careless, is now this: what separates concept art from concept design? Methodically, forensically, logically, Mike explains it thus: "Say the audience doesn't understand an artist's work. The artist might say, 'Well, they just don't get it.' Say the audience doesn't understand a designer's work. The designer will go away and 'seriously interrogate' what went wrong, then fix it." Put simply, Mike says, concept art makes the artist feel good and concept design makes the audience feel good.

"The biggest difference is that great concepts communicate something fundamental to a large audience, and great communication is ultimately about structure, logic, coherence, metaphor and empathy. These are the hidden ingredients that I believe make up great art."

➤➤   Mike increasingly uses nuanced metaphor in his concepts. This nuance is seen in his design work on Blade Runner 2049 and, he teases, the much-anticipated remake of Dune (scheduled for release in 2020). But he's only been able to do this since the designing, the making of the thing, became second-nature. Look at Mike's work from 30,000 feet – work in various fields, work inspired by various disciplines – and this is what you see: all the fancy stuff is built on very solid, but relatively simple foundations.

THE SHADOW MARSHAL'S SHIP
"A Hub level design for the Killzone Shadow Fall video game series. It's a transforming interorbital spaceship."

"I believe there's a hidden thread to it… I put a lot of cognitive energy into making a tightly knit, logical design. I can see artists who work in similar domains, that don't necessary pay attention to this hidden architecture of logic. Many artists focus on one area, say aesthetics, and don't look at the

❝ **I put a lot of cognitive energy into making a tightly knit, logical design** ❞

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This issue:

Photoshop
PAINT AN ICONIC SCI-FI CHARACTER

Film lover **Kevin McGivern** celebrates Alien's 40th anniversary by painting Ripley as she's about to turn the heat up on the xenomorph…

Artist PROFILE

Kevin McGivern
LOCATION: Scotland

Kevin is a professional artist and illustrator working in the editorial, publishing and advertising industries for clients such as Marvel Studios, Variety and Penguin Random House.
https://ifxm.ag/kevinm

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RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: BEST PENCIL

This brush produces a realistic feel of a pencil on paper.

SOFT/HARD EDGE

This brush allows for edge variability with its hard and soft edges.

PAINTERLY CANVAS TEXTURE

The brush's canvas texture stops my art from looking overly digital.

I've been a subscriber to ImagineFX for many years, so being asked to illustrate the cover was a great thrill for me. Films are a huge inspiration for my work, so when I found out that the brief was to paint Ellen Ripley from Alien, I was over the moon!

In this workshop, I'll go through my entire process, documenting every step of the way, answering many of the questions that have been asked in the past about my workflow. I'll take you through the stages of laying down the initial sketches, to creating a tight drawing, making colour roughs, my painting process and those finishing touches.

I've found throughout my career that the more organised I am at every stage, the better the piece turns out in the end. At this point, I've developed a pretty solid painting process, which I've found is important to give your work a consistent look and feel.

The first thing for me to do is to re-watch the Alien films. It's important for me to do this because I want to gain a sense of Ripley's character, and the feel and mood of the first film – which is 40 years old! It also gives me the chance to look for subtleties in the character that I may have missed when just watching the film purely for enjoyment.

1 Create a handful of initial sketches

The brief from the ImagineFX team was quite straightforward. I had to illustrate the "iconic Ellen Ripley from the first Alien film" with the background of the USCSS Nostromo's interior having a loosely sketched or hand-drawn look to it, so not as to overpower the cover. The drawing may be my favourite part of the process so I allowed myself to have some fun with some different poses for Ripley. The main criteria I gave myself was that she had to look iconic and strong.
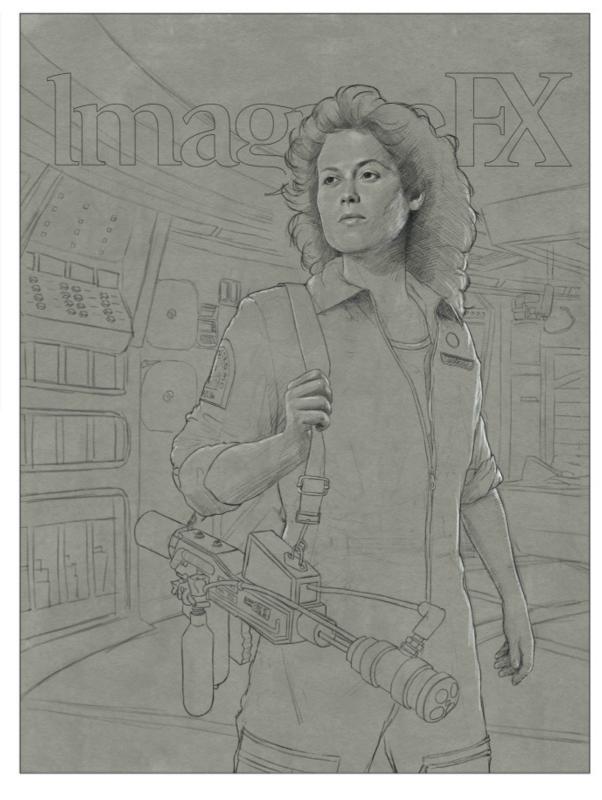
2 Create a mood board

I send the five sketches off to the team and they choose the sketch with Ripley holding the gun over her shoulder. At this point, I gather my references and create my mood board. I shoot my own references, take screencaps from the movie and find any images that have the "feel" of what I'm going for in the final image. PureRef is a great program for organising reference images.

3 Nail down the drawing

I really enjoy this stage and take my time to get the drawing nailed down as much as possible. I create a tight drawing and suggest lighting based on my reference photography and mood board. I often find with beginner artists, they don't spend long enough at the early planning stages of a piece, and the final piece suffers in the end. (Something that took me a while to learn too!)

4 Choose your colour palette

The ImagineFX team was quite specific with the look that it wanted from its film art special cover, but I wanted to give them another colour option, just in case. I come up with pleasing colour palettes to create one version of Ripley against a white background, and another featuring a dark blue background, and adjust the lighting appropriately. The white background was chosen, so I get to work on the painting.
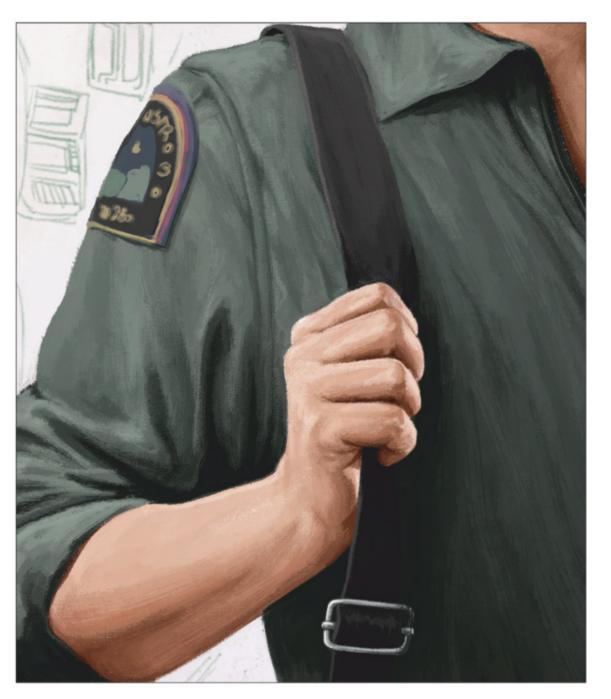
5 Defining the light and shadows

I always start the painting process with the face. Faces immediately attract the attention of the viewer so I know that if I get the face to a point I'm happy with, I can relax for the rest of the painting. At this stage, I'm not overly concerned with colour – I just want to define the areas of light and shadow.
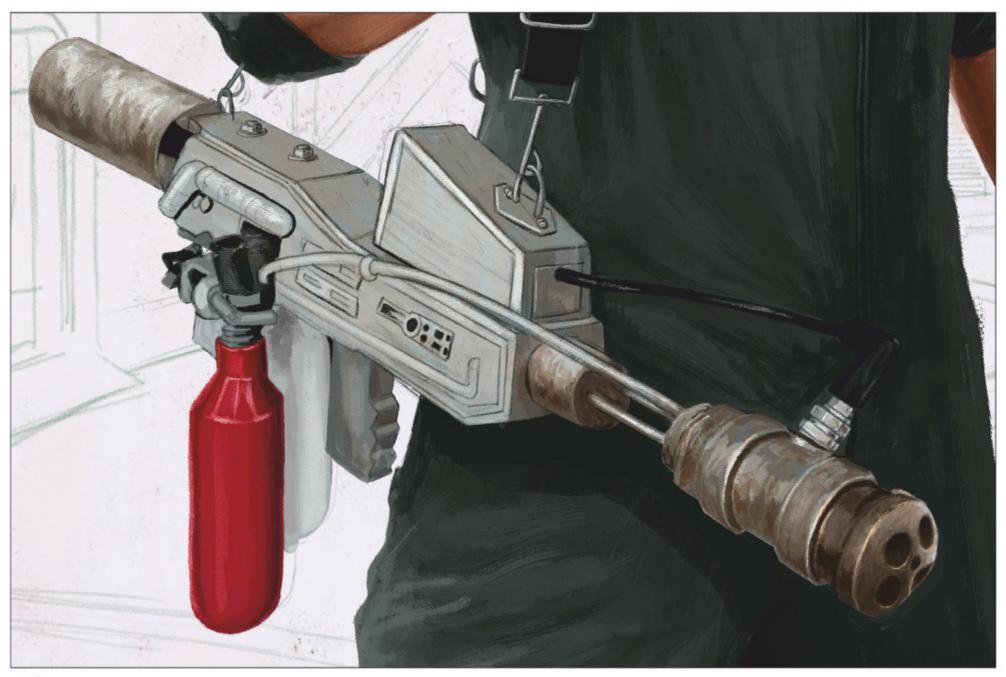

6 Don't scrimp on the hands!

After the face, the viewer will notice any faults in the hands right away. It's not unusual for me to spend 50 per cent of my time on the head and hands. Again, I'm not worried about any subtle colour changes in the hands just yet, I'm only interested in getting the light and shadow down.

7 Work on the clothing and gun

I then get to work painting the clothing and flamethrower. At this stage, I make some changes to the perspective of the flamethrower and position of the character's head. One of the things I love about working digitally is how easy these changes are to make. ➤➤
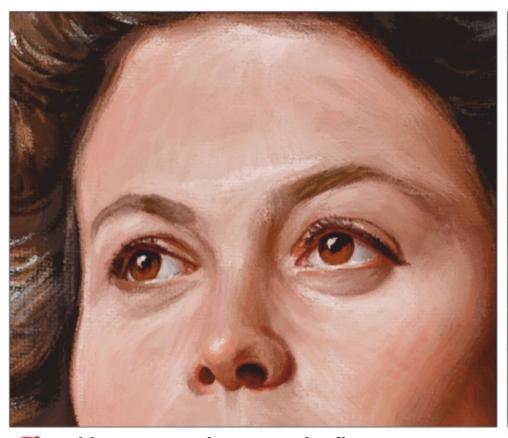
8 Developing the texture on the flamethrower

I wanted to give the flamethrower a feel of being used, and not be brand new. I created a Soft Light layer and glaze in some colour variations to give the metal a more rusted and worn appearance. It's important to go into this stage gradually. As with many Photoshop layer modes, if you're too heavy handed then it's easy to completely ruin the effect that you're going for.

9 Making a second pass on the figure

Now that the full figure is blocked in, I go back to the face and start hue variations in the skin. I add some pink around the cheeks and nose, redden the lips and make the eyes a saturated light brown. For this, I use a combination of Color layers and painting opaquely on a Normal layer.

10 Re-establish the line drawing

The drawing is an important part of my process and I want the viewer to see that in the final image. I go over the entire figure, re-establishing the lines of the drawing. Once this is done, I lock the Transparency of this layer, and colour the lines to fit with the painting.

11 Introduce a secondary light source

I want to give the figure a greater sense of form and interest, so I add a secondary light source on the figure. This also enables me to introduce another colour to the image, which I feel it needs.

12 Draw in the background

The brief calls for a sketched/hand-drawn background, so it's time to recreate one of the corridors from the Nostromo. I want to take advantage of leading lines, which will help to direct the viewer's attention back to Ripley.

If I need to adjust my values I'll use the Blend If option in the Layer Style panel. If I want to lift the highlights slightly, I'll fill a layer with white or a light colour, double-click that layer, and then use the sliders to ensure this layer only affects the lighter values underneath.

13 Making final adjustments

At this stage, the bulk of the painting is pretty much complete. Often as a finishing touch, I'll create a Solid Colour layer on top and set it to Soft Light. I choose a suitable colour and reduce the Opacity to between seven and 15 per cent. This brings a sense of unity to the image.

I'm often asked how I achieve a painterly look with my digital art. My answer is I paint as I would traditionally. I create an underdrawing, distinguish light and shadow, then glaze/paint in colours.

Another key aspect of my work is that I've created brushes that aren't easy to use. That sense of struggle ensures I concentrate on every brush stroke. I also leave in and even deliberately create "happy accidents". It's so easy with digital work to correct everything. I prefer to leave these happy accidents alone so that the viewer knows this image was created by hand.

CREATE CONCEPTS WITH THE PATTERN STAMP TOOL

Lino Drieghe reveals how this Photoshop staple can be used early on in the creative process to generate interesting textures

ImagineFX
VIDEO WORKSHOP

Workshops

Artist PROFILE

Lino Drieghe
LOCATION: Belgium

Lino is a part-time lecturer in concept art and freelancer with a primary skill in creating environment concepts and designs.
www.linodriegheart.com

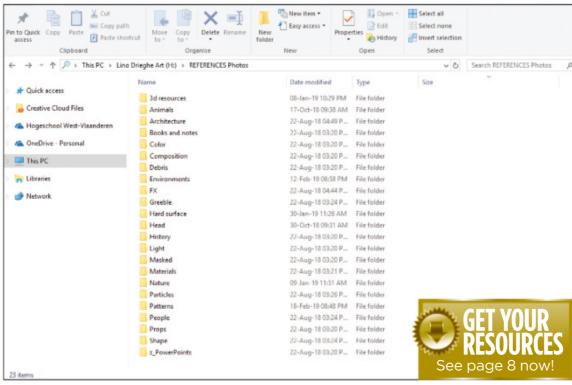Finding a good work-life balance is hard. In the evenings, when family life calms down, I like to search and learn new ways of working. I explore new techniques to add to my various workflows and write about them on my blog to help me understand them. The Pattern Stamp tool in Photoshop is one of my recent discoveries.

Sometimes I use this technique to either overcome the fear of the blank canvas or when the brief of a project has a lot of room for interpretation. I don't want to be fixated on just one idea. As a concept artist it's my job to generate a variety of ideas and concepts as quickly as possible.

It's creating that variety where the Pattern Stamp tool excels in. It generates interesting textures and colour variations from texture sheets.

Furthermore, it creates enough room for happy accidents to occur which can be beneficial to the early stages of the creative process.

In this workshop I'll take you through the process of creating your own custom patterns and how to apply them to a value sketch. Based on the outcome of placing the patterns, I'll refine the sketch to a working idea. Finally, I bring that idea to a more refined finish.
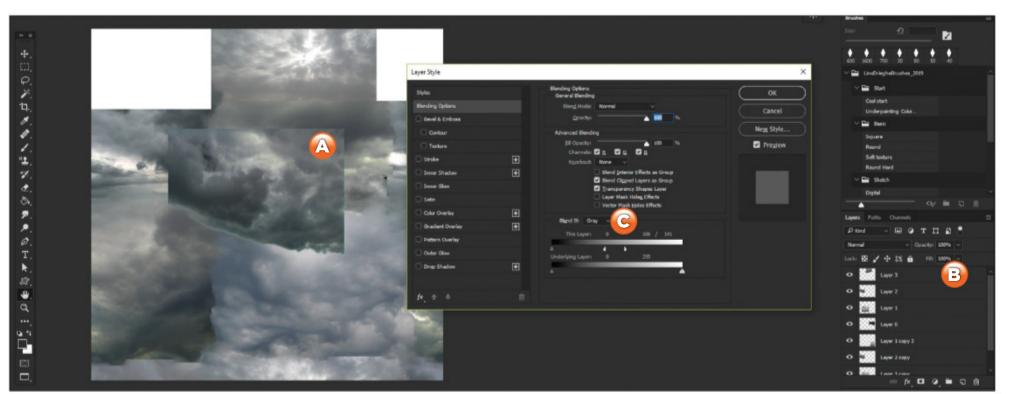
1 Gathering pictures

Before I start, I gather pictures to build my library of patterns. I'm using photos that I take myself or collected from friends and family. I'm building up my own reference library by storing photos on a cloud server. That way I can use my own photos, knowing there are no copyright restrictions on them.

2 Using the Pattern Stamp tool

The Pattern Stamp tool enables me to paint or fill my canvas with a pattern that I choose from a pattern library. Similarly to the Brush tool, I can select a brush tip to paint the pattern with. There are pre-made patterns available but for this workshop I'll make my own. I've created several patterns that can be downloaded from my website under the Resources tab.
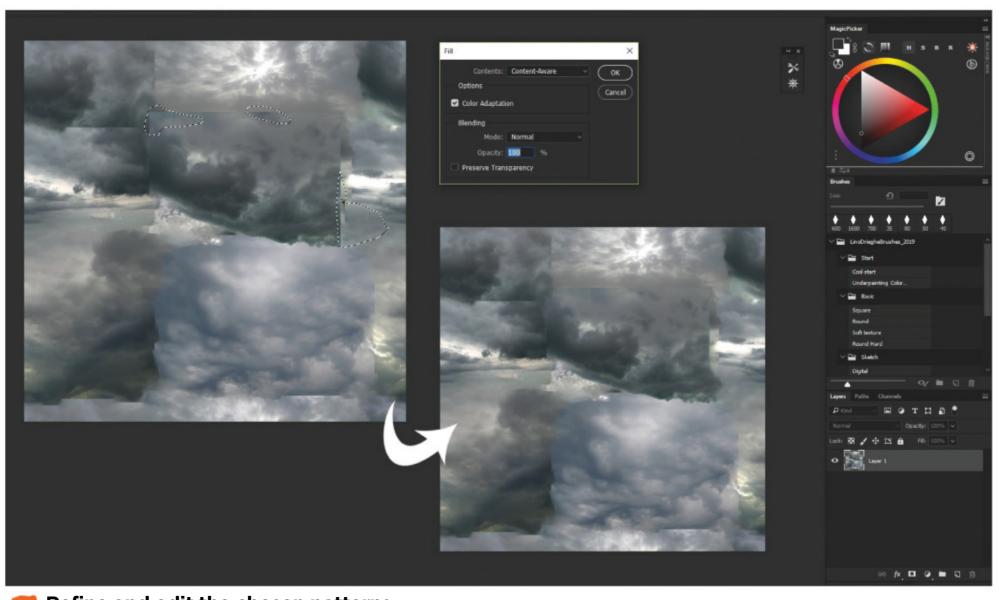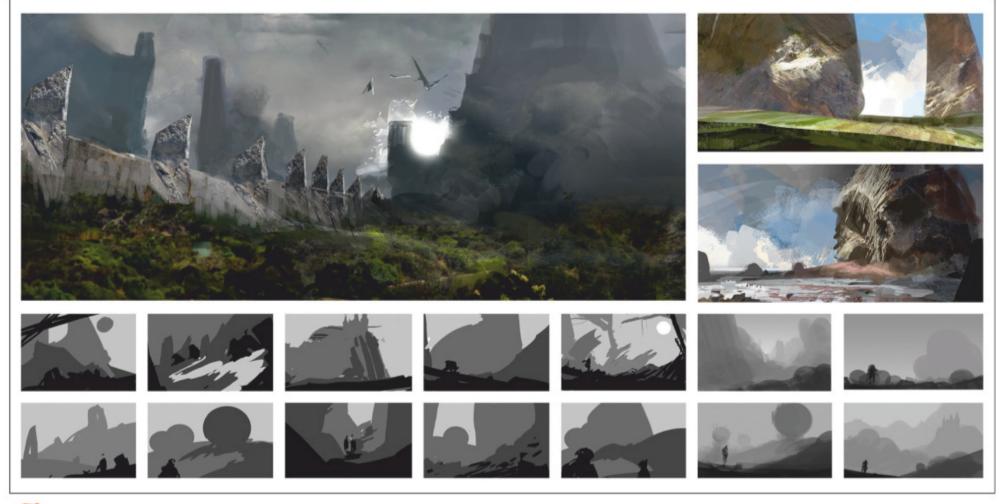
3 Creating patterns to use with the tool

I make a new document and copy-paste photos from my reference library (A). By double-clicking my layer (B) and using the Blend if… option under Layer Style (C), I can blend layers together by excluding colours. Holding Alt while dragging will split the slider in two, resulting in a smoother transition. I make sure that I arrange the photos in such a way that the lighting and shadows correspond with each other.

4 Refine and edit the chosen patterns

To retouch the edges of the photos, I use the Content Aware tool under Edit>Fill. In the dialog I choose Contents>Content Aware. By clicking OK, this tool fills the selection with the surrounding pixels and blends them together. I click Filter>Other>Offset to make the pattern tileable.

5 Warm up and create a series of sketches
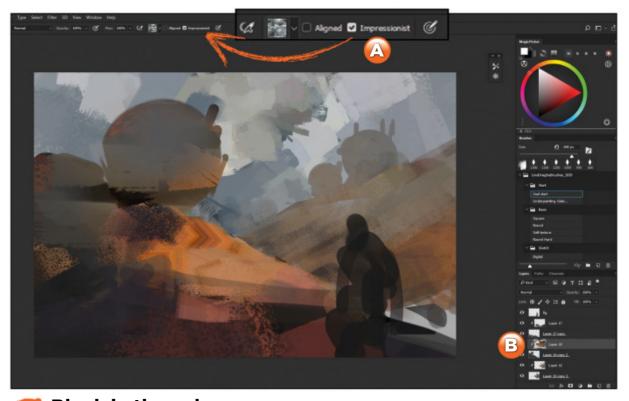
At this point I have no idea in mind so I use the Pattern Stamp tool to warm up, and to show how effective it is in the early phases of a painting. I start my sketches with limited values and use the standard Round brush to keep the shapes simple. After producing multiple sketches, I decide to develop one of them so I can show my whole process from start to finish in this workshop. ➨➨

6 Refining the value sketch

I create the feeling of atmospheric perspective by making the foreground values darker, and those in the background lighter. I deliberately avoid adding any light or shadows because I want the Pattern Stamp tool to do that for me. At the same time, I rearrange different layers to come up with a pleasing composition. I want the round shapes to contrast with the straight lines.
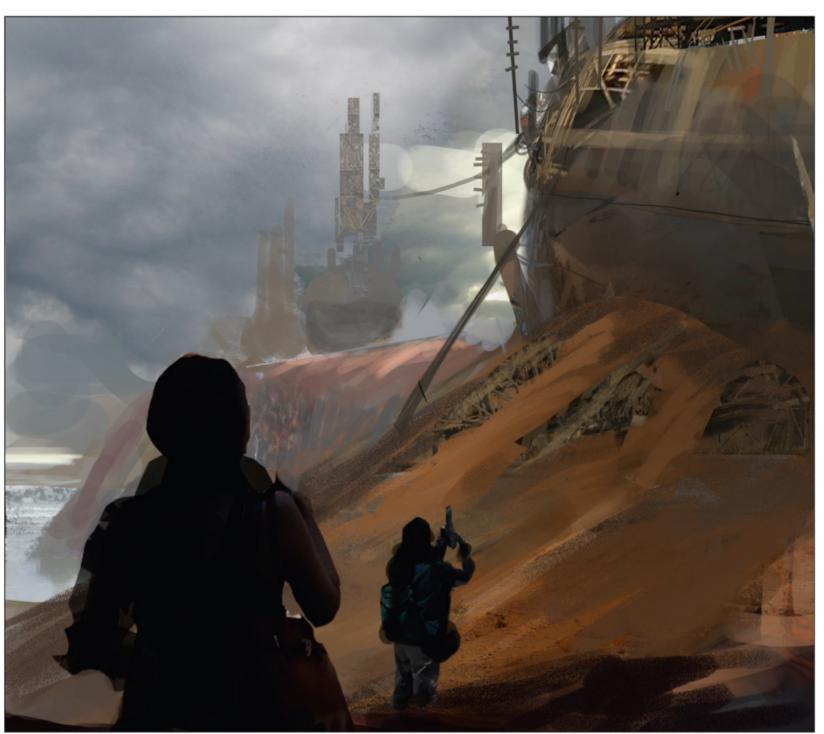
7 Block in the colours

I use the Impressionist mode (A) of the Pattern Stamp tool to block in the colours. The Impressionist mode will generate colour variations based on the colours Photoshop identifies in the active pattern. I block in the colours of each layer on a separate layer so I can add them as a clipping mask (B) and adjust them later on.

8 Making the most of those happy accidents

I create a new layer to paint with the Pattern Stamp tool with the Impressionist mode turned off. This is the moment where a happy accident should help take an idea to the next level. For those not aware of the phrase, a happy accident in painting is when something unique and unexpected happens. It turns out to be beneficial to your work and guides you on to a new path that you might not have considered.
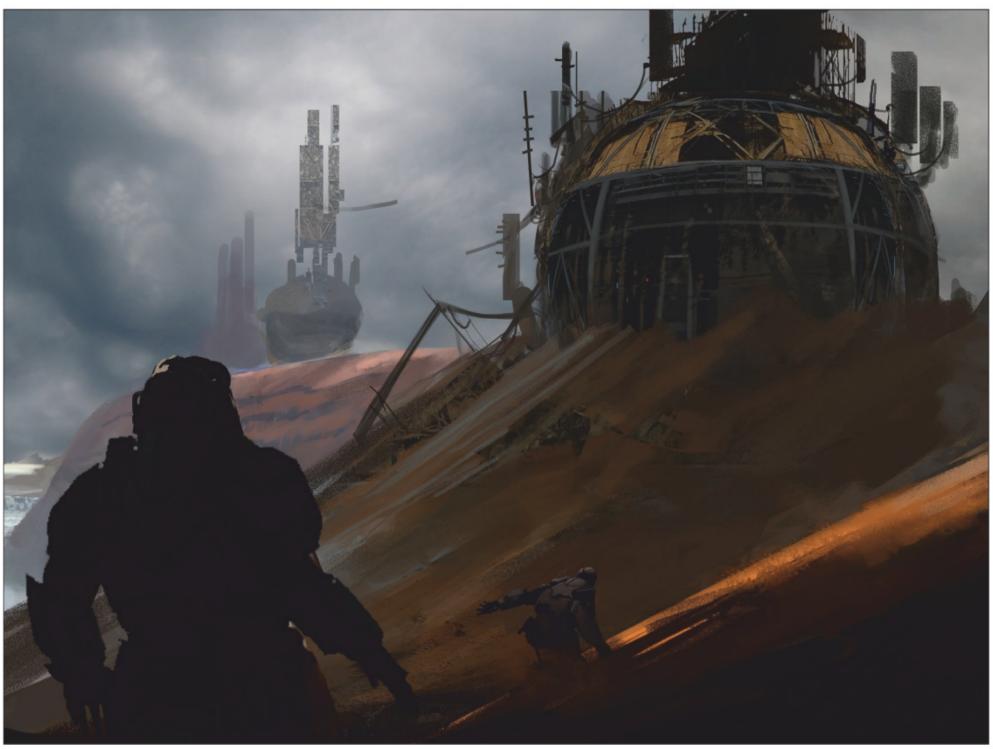
9 Rethink the story

By placing the Pattern Stamp tool I come up with the idea of having derelict communication spheres that are partially buried under 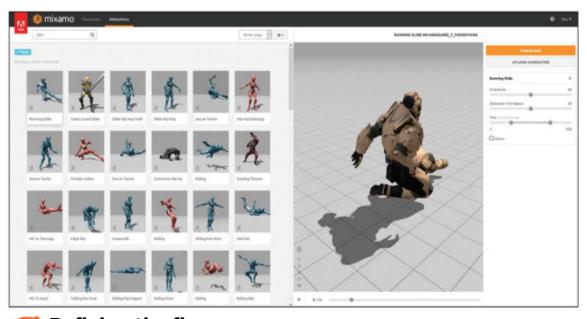the desert hills. I use the Pattern Stamp to create the sea and clouds in the background. Because I use clipping masks for all the coloured layers, I can easily adjust the values to the underlying greyscale layer.

10 Cleaning up the focal points

Once I'm happy with the overall positioning of elements, I upscale the image to a bigger resolution. This enables me to add more details on the focus points. By adding more layers with the Pattern Stamp tool and applying a Distort>Spherize Filter on them, I generate more details on the foreground communication hub.
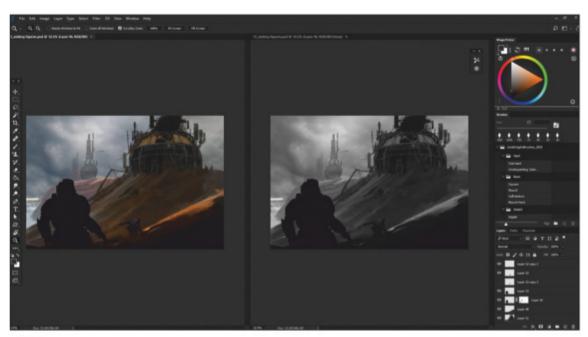
11 Refining the figures

Mixamo (www.mixamo.com) is my favourite tool to add figures to my paintings. It's an online service designed to rig and animate your custom 3D characters. It also holds a library of pre-made models and animations that are free for use. I pick a model and animation and screengrab the pose to add it to my painting. This model will help me to achieve the correct pose and proportions.

12 Check the readability of the composition

Using an interesting light and shadow pattern, I lead the viewer in and through the painting. By creating a repetition of shadows and lights I'm able to push the feeling of depth even more. I fix the values of the background hubs and add more perspective to the clouds in the sky.

13 Add greyscale and colour simultaneously

I go to Window>Arrange and create a new window for my open document. For this new window I change the viewing options: View>Proof Setup> Custom. In the dialog I choose sGray for the Device to Simulate menu. By placing the two windows next to each other, I can paint in colour and values at the same time.

14 Finishing touches

Working on the values and colours at the same time enables me to keep my values in place while making the finishing touches. I rearrange my layers slightly to create some more breathing space around them. I add extra small details to give everything a more finished look. After getting feedback from friends, I fix small parts of the painting, such as the perspective of the clouds.

BATMAN! Tony S Daniel paints The Caped Crusader in action!

Next month in...

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

Be a better comic artist

Artists from DC, Marvel, Dark Horse, Dynamite Entertainment and more help make your sequential art shine!

Plus

Superman talks!
Writer and illustrator Jorge Jiménez on his comic art career.

Ink fur, faces and more!
Tess Fowler shares her 15 tips for improving your inking skills.

Captain Marvel
How to paint a heroic comic art cover with the brilliant Jen Bartel.

© DC Comics

May 2019 *FULL FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS* ImagineFX

Artist PROFILE

Henry Fong
LOCATION: Canada

Henry is a concept designer and production illustrator working in cinema, TV and video game development. He's contributed to projects at Walt Disney, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Paramount Pictures, Twentieth Century Fox Film, Ubisoft and Cirque du Soleil, among others.
https://ifxm.ag/henryf

Photoshop
CONCEPT YOUR KEYFRAME ART FROM REAL LIFE
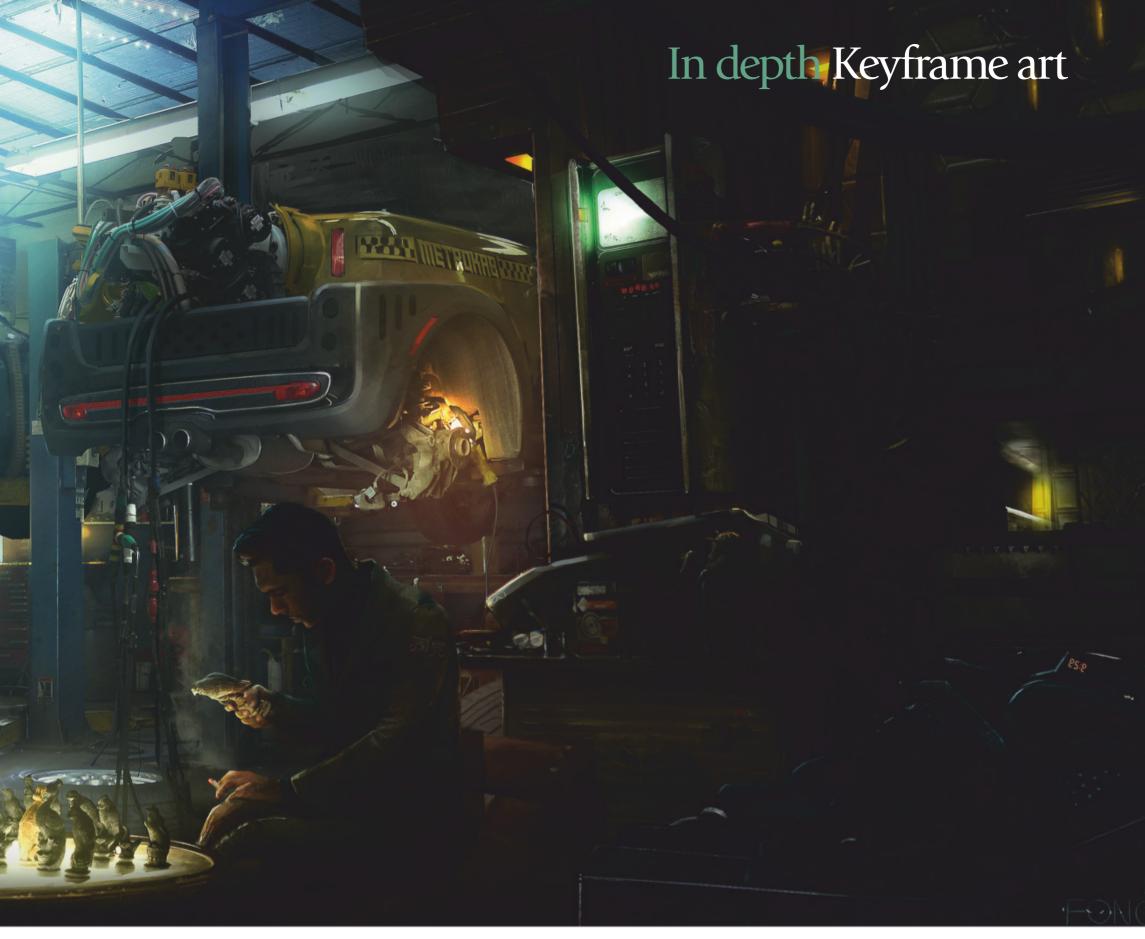
Henry Fong reveals how to create mood and drama from a chosen location photo provided by a production designer

Concept artists who are based in the art department during production often have to render keyframe art from a real location. This helps when exploring ideas or assessing the need for on-set dressing, set building or a CG set extension. This artwork can also be used as a communication tool between various departments – set decoration, graphics, construction, cinematographer, lighting and so on – so they can plan ahead. We're all working on the bigger picture, so to speak!

1 Understand the essence of a scene

To create a keyframe artwork, we need to have a story or a scenario to base the art on. Here's a typical example of a scene's description from the production department: "Rainy night, deep in the inner city of Los Angeles (not too distant future). There's a table for two inside an auto garage. Jim waits for JF to join him for their weekly chess game, when all of a sudden the sounds of gun shots and a crash break the silence of the night. Jim gets up and walks toward the back door to investigate."

First, let's consider what a garage from the world of tomorrow might actually contain. The scenario gives us the chance to create some fun-looking equipment. We'll also need to have Jim sitting at a table, with an empty chair for his friend JF to attend their weekly chess game, and a back door in the frame.

2 Choose to develop a thumbnail study

I usually draw my thumbnails while I'm reading the script. I think it's the best way to capture my initial thoughts – my first reaction to the scene. I try to transform the words from the script to a visual form by using composition, light and shadow. This is the perfect time to work out the basic composition of the frame. ➤➤
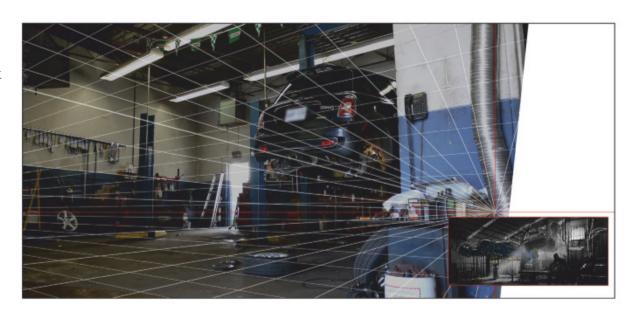
3 Choosing the right location photo for the scene

During the pre-production stage we'll receive potential location photos from the production designer or location department, and they usually come in the hundreds! It's important to choose a photo that can serve every purpose. One of the things to look out for in a photo is a good cinematic angle, which will help me showcase what's needed in the scene. In this case, we need to make sure this angle displays one or two vehicles in various stages of repair, a chess table, a couple of chairs and the usual equipment that's found in modern-day auto garages.

4 Aspect ratio and finding the proper perspective lines

Establishing the correct aspect ratio right from the start is crucial, because your art needs to mimic the final appearance of the film during the production presentation to the director and producers. Here I've chosen to work in widescreen format (2.35:1).

Identifying the correct perspective lines from the photo is also important. Everything painted into this picture will have to follow these lines. If the table or chair you paint into this photo is out of perspective then it won't matter how beautiful your rendering technique is, it won't work as a keyframe. Use Photoshop's line tools to create a perspective guide.

5 Designing the shot for maximum storytelling impact

It's time to decide where to place objects in the scene. In this frame, I need to figure out where my character is located and where the action will be in the shot. How can I use one frame to tell the whole story? I decide to place Jim sitting in the right-hand corner, with light coming from the street at the back door to his left. This will lead our eye to the back of the garage and the Blade Runner-esque spinner (the flying police car). The spinner will carry the flow towards screen left, where a pushing cart and the chair will lead our eye back to Jim and the phone behind him.

6 Laying down the textures

I'm keen to make this art photorealistic, so I'll be using photo textures from my personal photo library. This means all the elements will be similar to my location photo; there's no need to paint things from scratch. Make sure the textures match the lighting of the underlying photo. Study your location photo and identify the light source. Fail to do this and your painted elements will look out of place, which also means more work down the line when the piece evolves.

VFX

Set build

Foreground detailing

7 Modifying the location

Now I'm enhancing the drama and style of the shot. I decide to turn the ceiling to an old rusty sky light, because I want light coming through and hitting the mid-ground to heighten the drama of the scene. This will become a CG set extension for the VFX department. My focal point is on our character Jim, so I'll put all my retro high-tech gadgets on the right-hand wall to reflect the near-future time period we're in. This will be the set build for the art department.

Painting over the Mini to give it a futuristic appearance

Adding important elements into the scene – video phone, chess table, chair and so on
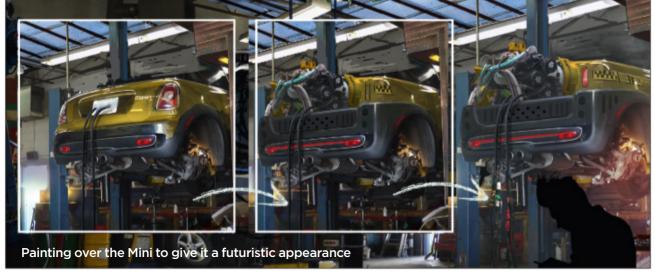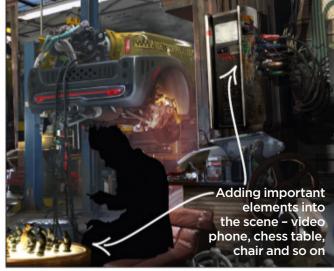
8 Painting and redesigning certain elements

Here I've replace the ceiling with a sky light and started modifying the Mini Cooper in the original photo, because I want this piece to be more retro futuristic. I take my inspiration from Syd Mead's iconic vehicle designs from Blade Runner, and turn the Mini to a semi-futuristic taxi cab. To complete the transformation I use the soft Round brush to paint the yellow colour on a Linear Dodge layer on top of the vehicle, and reshape the bumper on a Normal layer. However, I retain the beautiful mechanical parts that are visible underneath the chassis. I also begin to refine some important story elements, such as the chess table and video phone. ➤➤

Warm lights (secondary)

Cold lights (main)

Warm lights (secondary)

9 Establishing the lighting and mood

After I've established every major elements within the shot, it's time to finalise the lighting. This story takes place in the Blade Runner universe, and so I'd like to match the keyframe's mood with the film. What better source of inspiration to use than its cinematographer, Jordan Cronenweth? His style uses a strong backlight to bring out interesting silhouettes of objects in the mid- or foreground.

I decide to use the sky light as my main source of light. There will be a strong searchlight bursting through the sky light into the garage's mid-ground, which is coming from the Off World Colonies' blimp flying above. This will create an interesting silhouette from our character and the police spinner. I've also placed some warm light all around the scene strategically, which will direct the viewer's eye to look around within the shot.

10 Character costume

Characters are one of the most important elements in a keyframe. Sometimes I'll take the opportunity to walk over to the costume department to see if they've already designed the character's costume, so I can put them in my shot to add an extra layer of realism in my scene. I usually start by painting my character with an interesting silhouette. I've found this to be a very efficient way to create an image that reads well.

11 Adjusting the final lighting in the keyframe

This is my final adjustment stage on the lighting in the scene. I've also started to introduce some atmosphere layers, adding some smoke to create depth within the shot. I usually use the Color Picker tool to select the colour from where the light source is and then use a soft Round brush to glaze over the background, before adjusting the layer's Opacity to achieve the right balance.
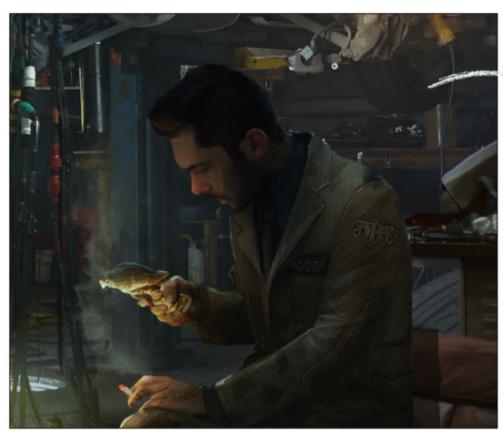
12 Detailing and composition adjustment

It's important to keep your key elements on separate layers at this point before you present it to the production designer or director. There's a very good chance they'll ask you to make adjustments, move things around or take thing out within the scene. Here, I've moved a few things around to improve the composition of the shot. I've also edited the foreground element to emphasise the perspective of the shot.

Final highlight and touch-up on the character – the keyframe's focal point

13 Placing highlights

Because I've locked down the lighting setup, I know where the key light and the secondary lights are. Now it's time to punch out those highlights and reflective lights on various surfaces in the painting. For hard surfaces I usually use the Lasso tool to isolate the area I want to highlight and use a Soft brush to paint over the area. For rim light I'll use flat Round brush with Pen Pressure on.

14 Final touch-up, adding additional textures and colour adjustment

During the final stages I usually use a hard Round brush to bring out some hard edges and highlights in the focal point area. I also use the Curves, Color Adjustment and Levels tools to make some last-minute adjustments.

Using the hard Round brush to bring out final details
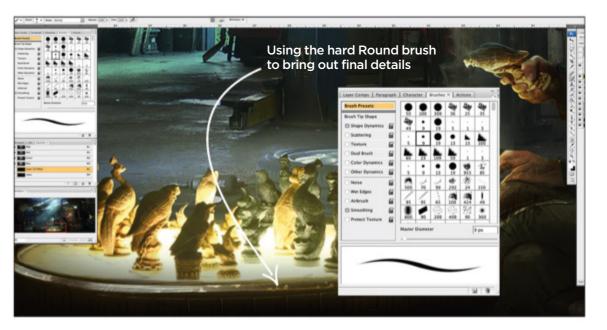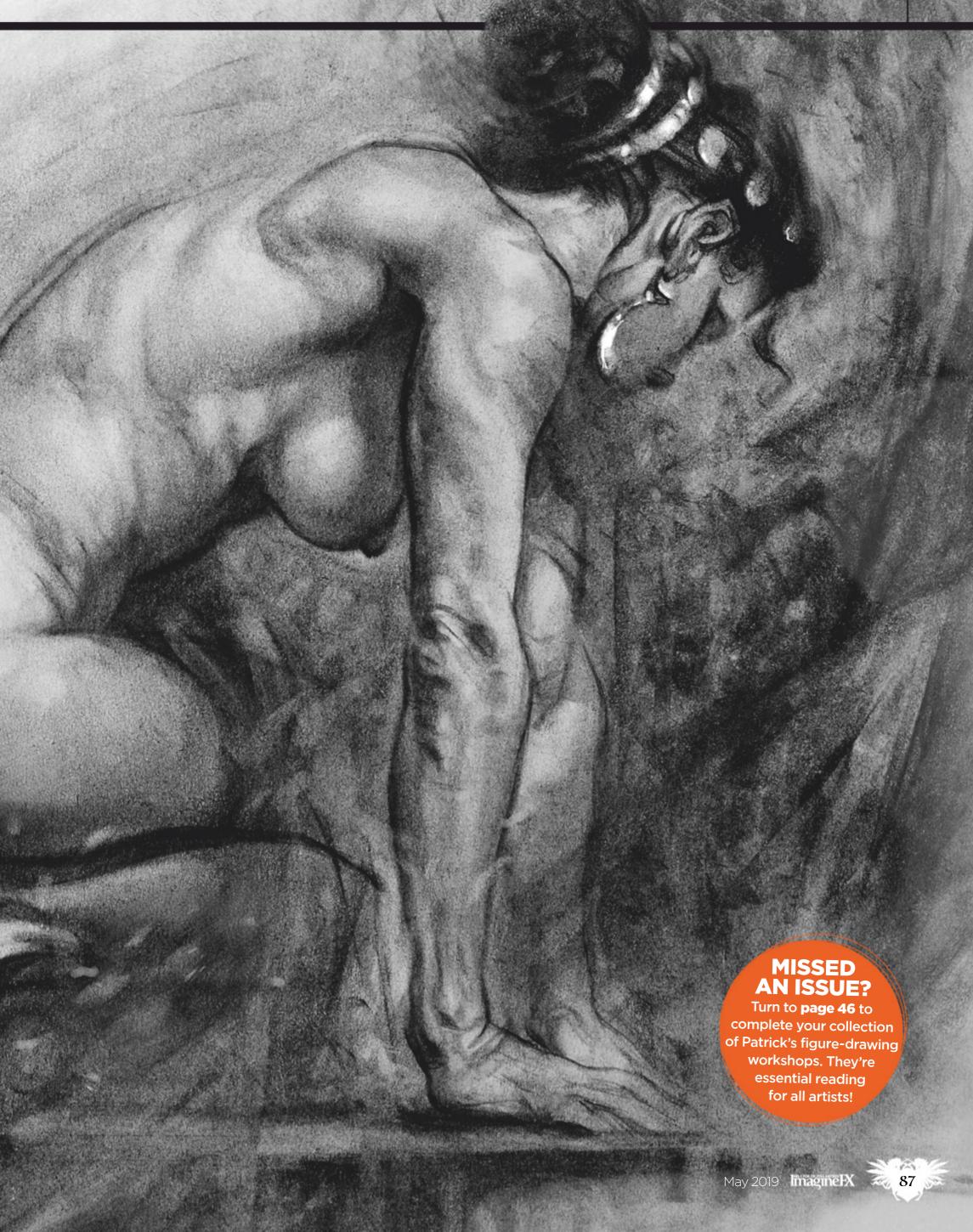
Figure drawing: part 7

PERFECT THE ART OF CHIAROSCURO

Patrick J Jones explores the mysteries of light and shadow, and demonstrates how to harness their atmospheric properties

Artist PROFILE

Patrick J Jones
LOCATION: Australia

Patrick is a figurative artist author and teacher. His art technique books, The Anatomy of Style and The Sci-fi & Fantasy Techniques of Patrick J. Jones were both award-winning best sellers. His latest book on drawing the figure, Figures from Life, is now on sale.
www.pjartworks.com

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!

Welcome to part seven of my eight-part workshops for ImagineFX on drawing the figure. Today we'll be drawing Alana, while placing the focus on chiaroscuro. This is the composition of light and shadow to create depth, but more importantly, mood. Having explored depth using value in part five we can now build on that knowledge and delve deeper into the artistic realms of darkness.

Chiaroscuro creates an emotional atmosphere in both art and film. Think of the films that engaged us with their skilful play of light and dark. A few that come to mind are Blade Runner, Eraserhead and Sunset Boulevard. These type of movies are sometimes referred to as Film Noir, ➤

VIDEO WORKSHOP

Note how chiaroscuro light leads our eye from the elbow through the hips, in a gestural curve to the big toe.

Once again chiaroscuro simplifies our composition, this time creating dramatic focus along the arc of the back.

meaning 'dark film', but their moody lighting can be seen in centuries-old oil paintings such as the startling An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump by Joseph Wright, painted in 1768, which is housed in the National Gallery in London.

Films with artistic light are often the collaborative work of a director and a cinematographer. When I first watched Apocalypse Now I was entranced by the cinematography and how it created a constant mood flowing from one scene to the next. As an artist it felt like the emotional and gestural flow through great figurative art.

SINGLE LIGHT SOURCE

In the two photographs at the top of this page we can see how clearly the figures stand out from the background. They are well defined, dimensional and atmospheric in tone, and for that reason they hold our attention. This is due to the single directional light source and a dark, uncluttered background. My lights are positioned high to recreate an artificial afternoon sun, in a dark studio background. One benefit of artificial light is that it's unchanging and remains constant with no dimming due to passing clouds.

However, you don't even need to buy a lighting setup if you want to create a chiaroscuro photoshoot. All that's needed is a sunny day and a dark background. An old abandoned factory with a hole in the roof will give you the right light, or any indoor space with an open roof. Add a cell phone on a makeshift tripod and you can create a professional photoshoot.

And so with our model posed we begin our own chiaroscuro adventure of shifting emotional shadows and light using our humble charcoals and pencils. Let's get started…

1 The beauty of living separate lives

Here we have our wonderful photo and pose to draw from. But how can a drawing compete with such a great photograph? Well, it doesn't have to. Photographs and drawings live separate lives in the world of art. With that thought in mind we're free to interpret rather than copy the photo.

2 Plotting structures in the composition

With my willow charcoal I plot out the figure with two major structures: a long tube for the upper torso and a ball for the hips. Working from big shapes to small I add the scapula (wing bone) and below the scapula I indicate the serratus and latissimus bulges as a converging V-shape.

3 Taking a holistic approach

I continue adding smaller structural shapes to define areas such as the hip bone. Structural shapes are simple versions of anatomy. If I were to draw the intricacies of each anatomical shape as I go, the drawing would get so complicated that I might lose the sense of the whole figure.

WORKSHOP MATERIALS

PENCIL
General's soft charcoal pencil, Pitt charcoal pencil

CHARCOAL
General's compressed charcoal sticks

ERASERS
Kneadable eraser, mono eraser, electric eraser, pencil eraser, grip eraser

MISCELLANEOUS
Paper stumps, tissue paper, washed and dried shammy leather cloth, newsprint
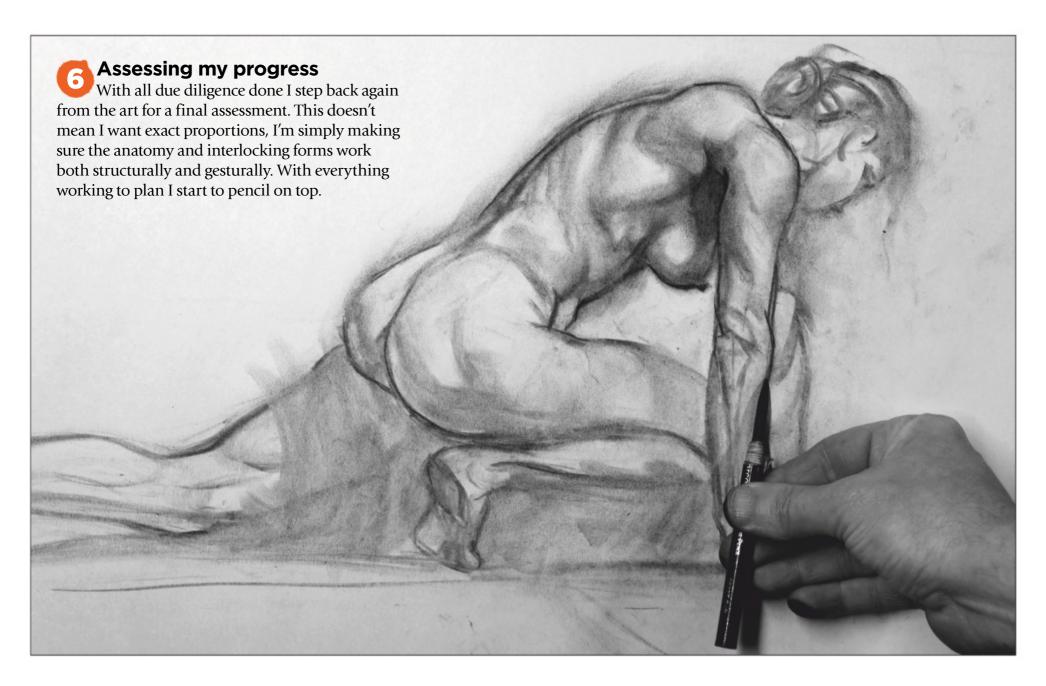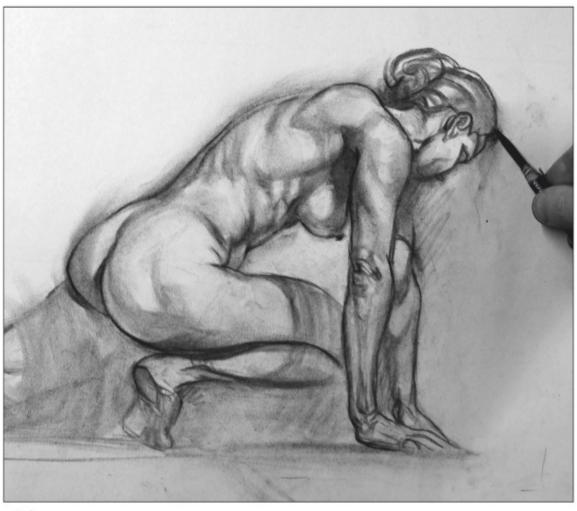

4 The power of structure

From here we begin to reap the benefits of strong structure. As I go over the drawing's simple shapes again it's easy to add smaller anatomical details such as the ribs, the sacrum pad above the gluteus, and the two serratus notches visible at the left of the breast.
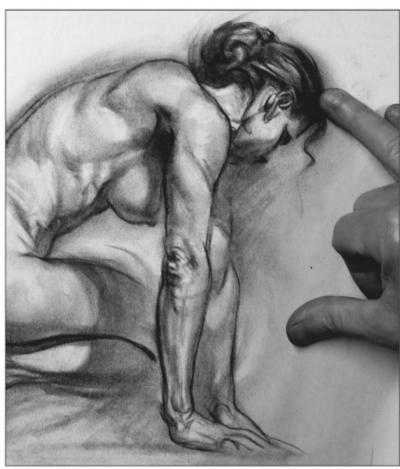

5 Spotting flickering changes

I smudge the charcoal into softer forms. In life drawing classes I have my students step back at this stage and glance back and forth at the model until they see every flickering change between their drawing and the pose in order to make adjustments. Time spent analysing forms early is time saved later. ➡➡

Workshops

6 **Assessing my progress**
With all due diligence done I step back again from the art for a final assessment. This doesn't mean I want exact proportions, I'm simply making sure the anatomy and interlocking forms work both structurally and gesturally. With everything working to plan I start to pencil on top.

7 **The figure has become overly gestural**
I'm strolling down easy street now as I continue pencilling over my self-approved structure, or so it seems… In my quest to make every line more gestural I've made the raised scapula too rounded. Keep in mind that structure and gesture are a fine balance of back and forth, which can fall apart at any time.

8 **The magical chiaroscuro**
Now on to the subject at hand: the magical chiaroscuro. I'm thinking of the single source of light and how it tumbles across the forms as I blend with my fingers. To study the power of chiaroscuro use your bedside light and turn any model around. Notice how the strong light and shadow changes as you do this.
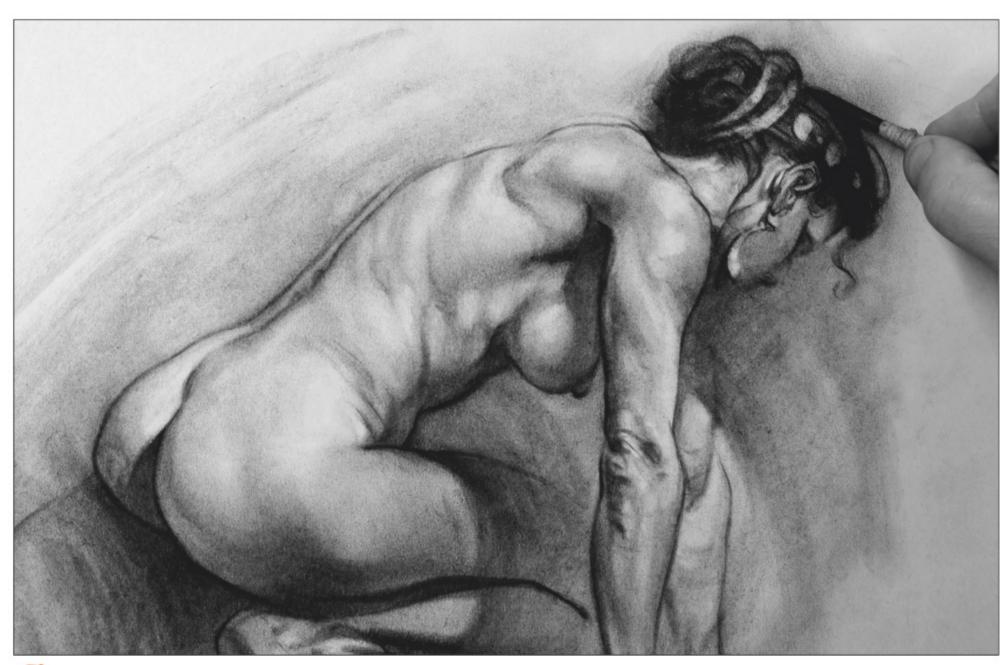
9 Creating a sense of sfumato

I make the shadows darker than I need so I can judge the light better. Note the misty quality of the shadowed leg. This is called sfumato and gives us both atmosphere and a clearer focus toward the more contrasting upper figure. Often what we don't show is more interesting than what we do show.
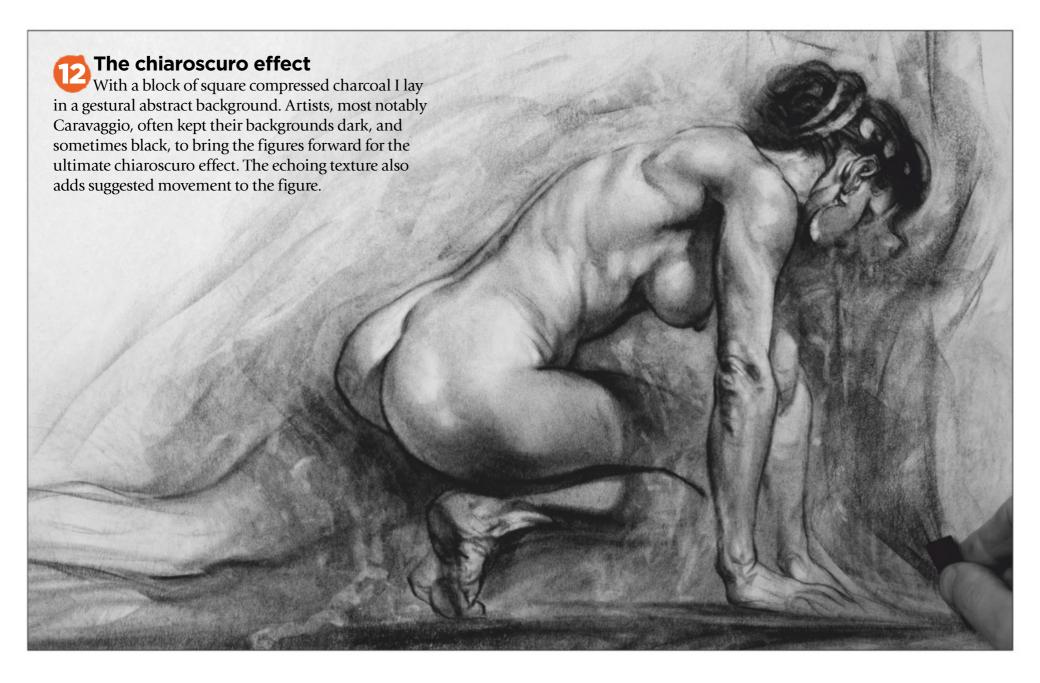

10 Straights on the curves

I've finally addressed that pesky scapula by drawing a straight line across the upper curve. Placing straight lines on top of curves can add authority to a line. This is something I do more often on the male figure to add a more rugged look, but this approach can work on the female figure, too.
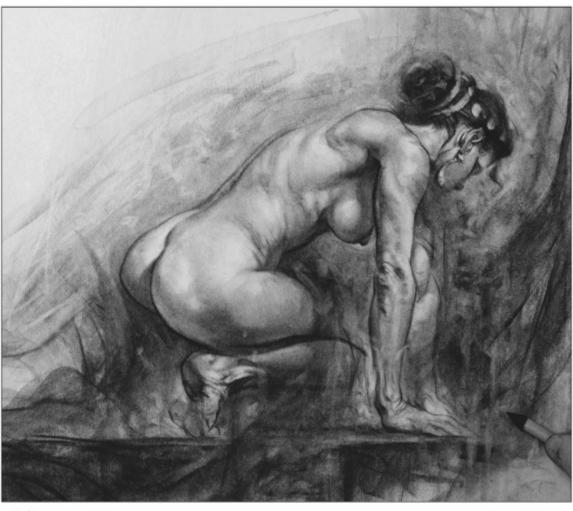

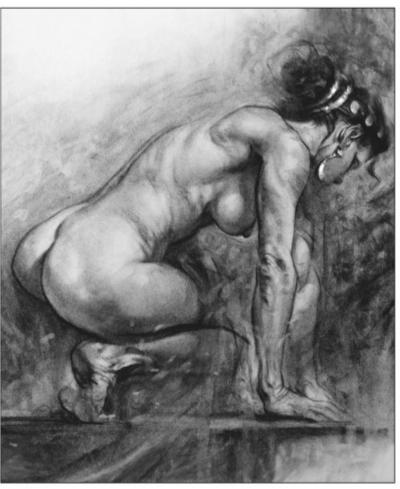### 11 Bringing in detail, but the drawing's not done yet...

After a round of tissue blending the drawing becomes a lighter affair. I add some head ornament with an eraser, then pencil in detail. I could call the drawing finished at this stage, but it's a little too bright and breezy. I feel I need to add more depth, mood and atmosphere. ➡
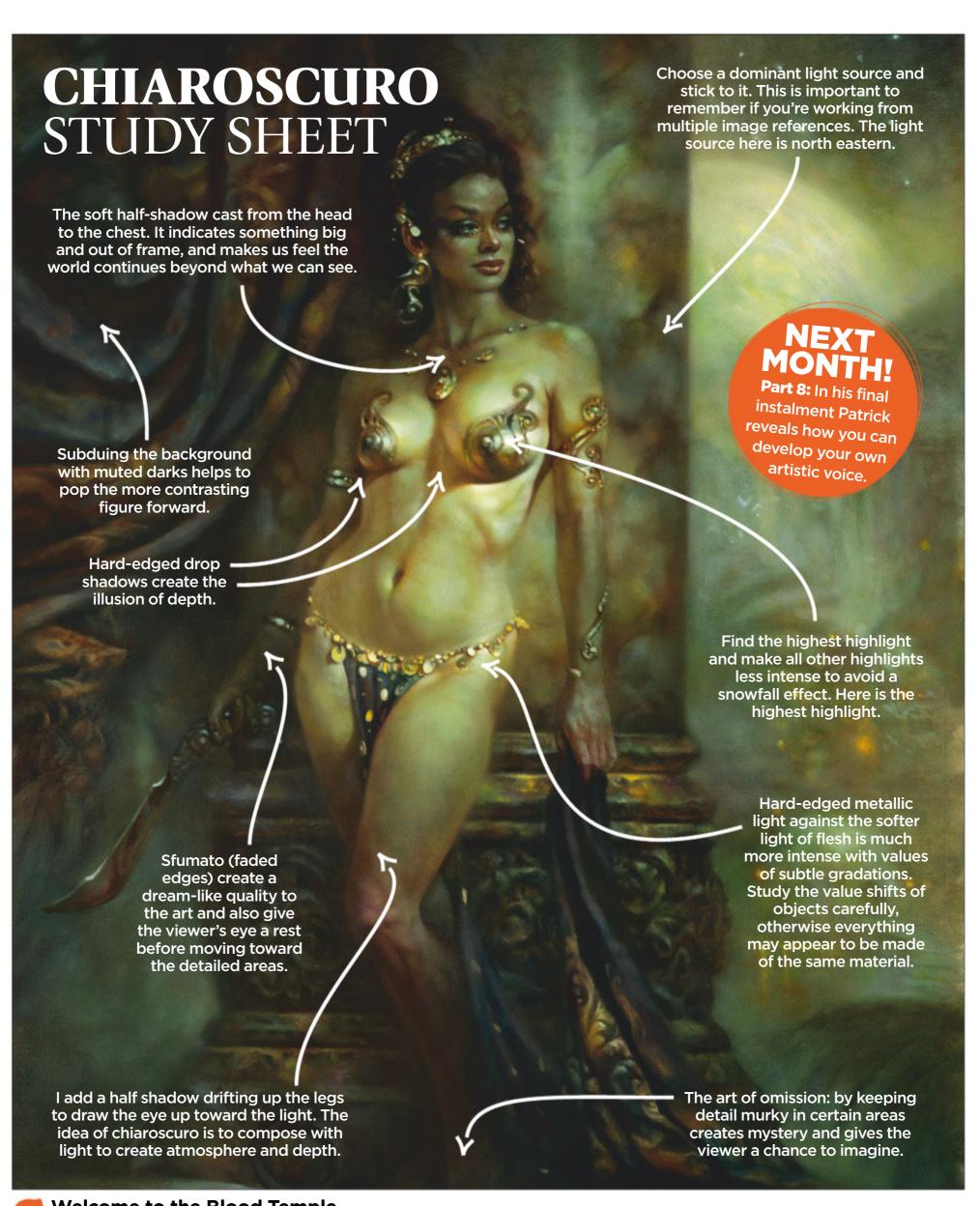
12 **The chiaroscuro effect**
With a block of square compressed charcoal I lay in a gestural abstract background. Artists, most notably Caravaggio, often kept their backgrounds dark, and sometimes black, to bring the figures forward for the ultimate chiaroscuro effect. The echoing texture also adds suggested movement to the figure.

13 **Placing texture against flesh**
I continue texturing the background with tissue, shammy leather cloth and kneadable eraser, turning my hand as I make shapes to avoid repetition. Texture not only adds interest, it can also make flesh seem softer by contrast. At this point I use a paper stump to soften some edges.

14 **The product of an artist's hand**
Here I call the drawing finished. The photograph is already a distant memory, a component that has been put aside to live its own life elsewhere. The drawing stands alone now, a new-born creation of organic line, tone and gestural energy that can only come from an artist's hand.
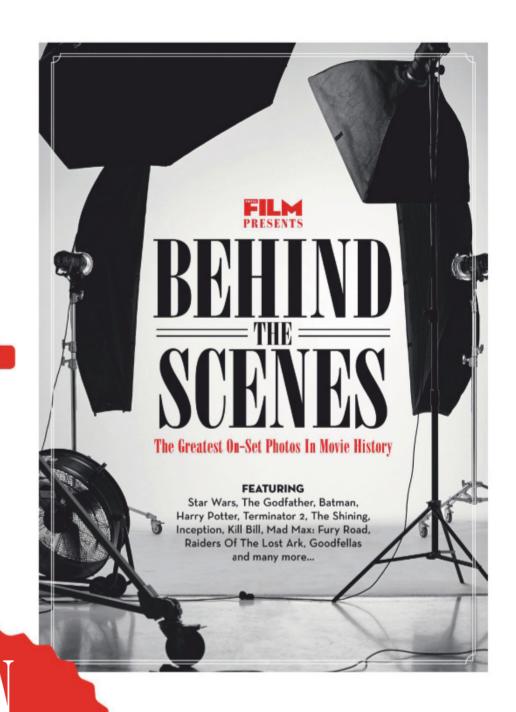
CHIAROSCURO STUDY SHEET

Choose a dominant light source and stick to it. This is important to remember if you're working from multiple image references. The light source here is north eastern.

The soft half-shadow cast from the head to the chest. It indicates something big and out of frame, and makes us feel the world continues beyond what we can see.

NEXT MONTH!
Part 8: In his final instalment Patrick reveals how you can develop your own artistic voice.

Subduing the background with muted darks helps to pop the more contrasting figure forward.

Hard-edged drop shadows create the illusion of depth.

Find the highest highlight and make all other highlights less intense to avoid a snowfall effect. Here is the highest highlight.

Sfumato (faded edges) create a dream-like quality to the art and also give the viewer's eye a rest before moving toward the detailed areas.

Hard-edged metallic light against the softer light of flesh is much more intense with values of subtle gradations. Study the value shifts of objects carefully, otherwise everything may appear to be made of the same material.

I add a half shadow drifting up the legs to draw the eye up toward the light. The idea of chiaroscuro is to compose with light to create atmosphere and depth.

The art of omission: by keeping detail murky in certain areas creates mystery and gives the viewer a chance to imagine.

15 **Welcome to the Blood Temple**
As long as the light comes mostly from powerful single source the figure will appear to be carved from light and shadow, regardless of time or place. For my oil painting, Blood Temple I worked with chiaroscuro to create the mood of a misty twilight scene.
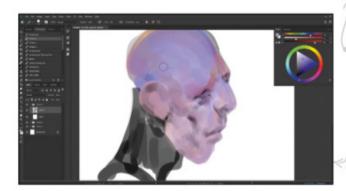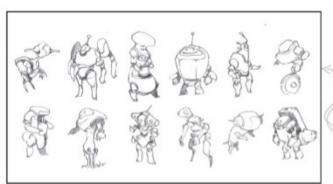
2 GREAT READS!

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Reviews

The latest art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team…

5 PRODUCTS ON TEST

The Pre-Raphaelite Language of Flowers

MARVELOCITY — THE MARVEL COMICS ART OF ALEX ROSS

SOFTWARE

96 Vue Professional
We see what improvements have been made to the software that enables you to create infinitely varied environments.

TRAINING

99 Rendering/Blending
Artist Anthony Jones helps you with some small improvements that will make a big difference to every painting you make.

BOOKS

100 Beginner's Guide to Sketching: Robots, Vehicles & Sci-Fi Concepts
Learn how to develop your ideas into futuristic creations with this guide.

101 Marvelocity: The Marvel Comics Art of Alex Ross
Relive almost three decades of high-energy comic book art by a master of the medium.

101 The Pre-Raphaelite Language of Flowers
Discover the meanings behind symbolic flowers in well-known Pre-Raphaelite art.

RATINGS EXPLAINED ★★★★★ Magnificent ★★★★ Great ★★★ Good ★★ Poor ★ Atrocious

We found that Vue's Path Tracer tool was slow to respond to watery surfaces.

Vue Professional

MAC & PC

LAND AHOY We see what improvements have been made to the software that enables you to create infinitely varied environments

Price $75 (monthly), $750 (annual) **Company** Bentley/E-on **Web** https://info.e-onsoftware.com

Used in films like Avatar, Vue has been an industry staple for many years. It was the first application to offer ecosystems, allowing many to dig in and get their fingers dirty in digital nature. It evolved into a toolkit staple, with ease of workflow always being its key feature. Its current clients include 343 Industries as well as Naughty Dog and Saatchi & Saatchi.

E-on has streamlined Vue's range of tool options into three packages: Creator, Professional and Enterprise, with monthly subscription costs ranging from under $20 to $99 (there are also annual subscription options available). We took a look at what Vue Professional offers artists and small studios, particularly from a productivity point of view.

The first thing you'll notice is the new UI. Previously, its interface was a gloomy monochrome affair, although coloured icons helped on the clarity front. Thankfully, you can now define the colours in the general UI.

The main new feature is Substance SBSAR file support. The Substance toolkit has become a standard feature in 3D and so this is one of the features that's sure to boost your productivity

> **❝ The ecosystems have been improved and are a lot easier – and fun – to work with ❞**
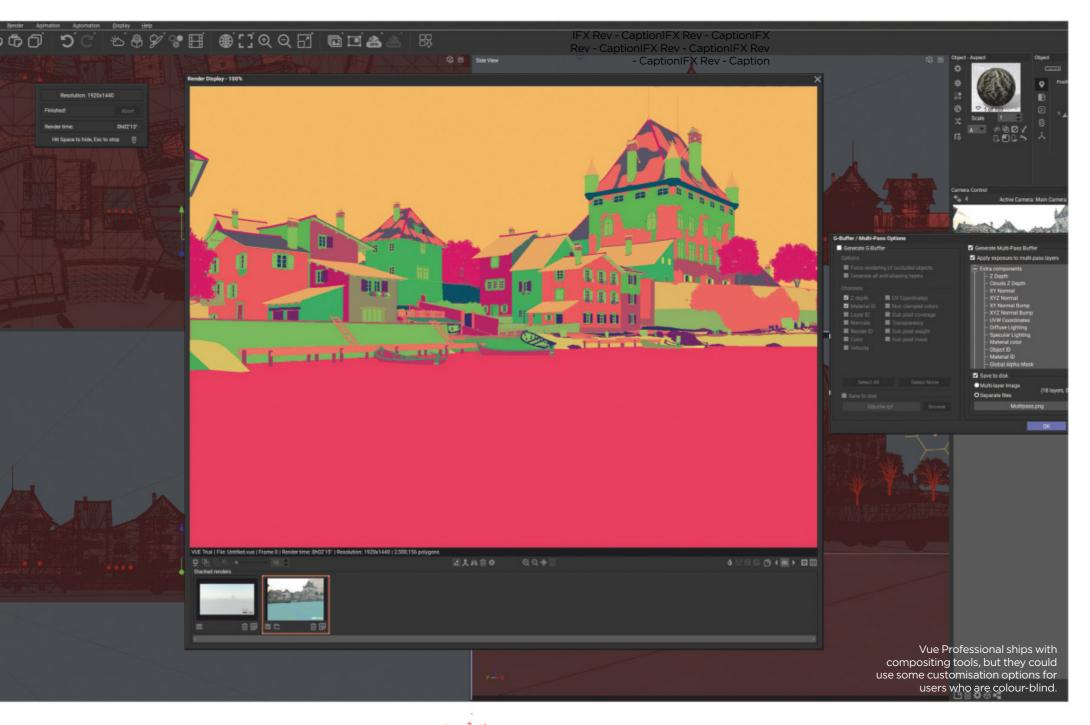
levels. Unfortunately, it won't read all the exposed parameters in the Material Editor, but hopefully this is only a software patch away.

The program's Path Tracer tool is still a bit slow on glass and water, but there are noticeable improvements in other areas. The general render speed has received a nice boost in the Standard Vue renderer, too. This also goes for the ecosystems, which have been improved and now make it a lot easier – and fun – to work with your scene's vegetation, especially when painting.

Vue also has the functionality for the industry standard OpenVDB volumes in the Material Editor and, like Terragen, now offers VDB export and import. This means you can import

Vue Professional ships with compositing tools, but they could use some customisation options for users who are colour-blind.

VDB clouds from, say, Houdini, and they'll render quickly because the density is already baked in the mesh.

However, despite the new features, some things are an issue. If Vue wants to live up to its claim of boosting productivity, then it has to address the random crashes. Lost work is lost work, no matter how often you autosave. E-on also needs to do something about Vue's habit of hogging system resources to the extent of bringing everything else to a halt. This occurs even in low-res preview renders.

It's clear E-on needs to offer more if it's to stand a chance in a market where, for example, Clarisse 4 at €499 a year can do more for less money.

If Vue is to be one of the applications left standing in a market where Clarisse, Houdini, UE and Unity are the order of the day in terms of workflow and productivity, E-on has to step up its game. Vue has many good points when used in isolation, but put the software in a workflow setting and its crash-prone nature counts against it.

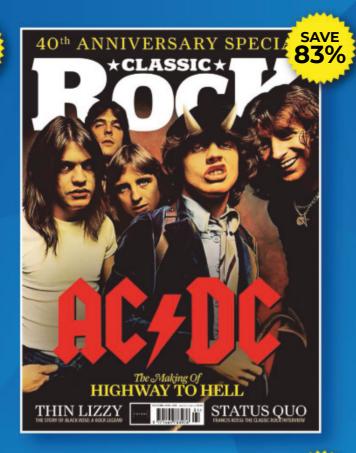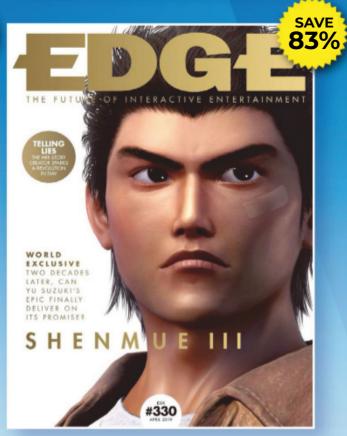## DETAILS

Features
■ Ships with Plant Factory
■ New versioning system
■ Substance SBSAR support
■ Improved Path Tracer
■ VDB/Open VDB functionality

System Requirements
PC: Windows 64-bit (Windows 7, Windows 8 or Windows 10), multi-core processor (Intel QuadCore or Core i7), 8GB of RAM or better, at least 4GB of free hard drive space, graphics card with at least 4GB of VRAM
Mac: OS X 10.13 or better, multi-core processor (Intel Quad Core or Core i7), 8GB of RAM or better, at least 4GB of free hard drive space, graphics card with at least 4GB of VRAM

Rating
★★★☆☆

Vue's Path Tracer tool has been updated for this release.

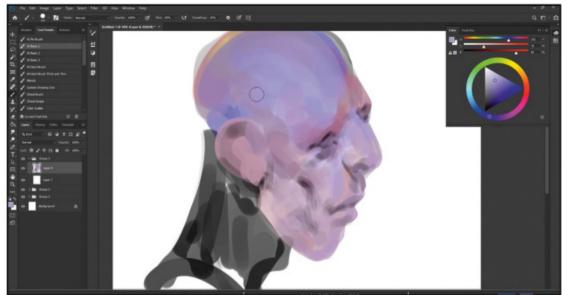It's easier than you think to render smooth, natural blends in your paintings, as Anthony Jones shows.

Rendering starts with practice, says AJ, as he demonstrates the basic exercises that will help you improve your painting skills.

It's not just about which tool you use: AJ drills down into the details of setting up brushes to making blending quicker and easier.

Boredom is a very real obstacle to achieving great renders: AJ has some hard-won wisdom to share on how to keep yourself motivated.

Rendering/Blending

SMOOOOTH Anthony Jones reveals the small tweaks you can make to your painting process that will make a big difference to your art

Publisher Anthony Jones **Price** $4.50 **Format** Download **Web** www.artstation.com/robotpencil

While some video tutorials are like epic sagas, offering a big-picture view of creating art, this video from Anthony Jones ('AJ') is more like a short story. The tale that AJ relates here is how you can improve your rendering with ease and a little practice, making your paintings look smoother and more realistic.

Three pithy chapters give you a guide to what's needed. First up is a basic exercise to create natural blends. AJ shows you how to break down forms into simple shapes to get your initial values down, then start to blend them together. There are a few different methods he uses, but his main point in this video is that many artists and students simply don't practise this painting stage enough. Just crafting out simple forms to the best of your ability can teach you a lot.

The second chapter sees AJ get into the mechanics of rendering in Photoshop. He drills down into brush settings such as Shape Dynamics and Flow, showing how they affect the results, so you can make your brushes 'blend-friendly'. He also reveals his preferred settings for blending with the Smudge tool, and discusses how pen pressure settings can tear up the rule book when you're painting with a graphics tablet.

AJ's point in the third chapter, however, is critical: no matter how much you practise and tweak your brushes, the crucial ingredients are time and patience. You'll have to invest a lot of time to achieve great rendering, so he suggests ways to help retain your focus while you work, so that you avoid taking shortcuts through impatience.

There's a fourth video without narration that brings all of this together, as AJ paints a head with immaculate blending. His aim with this video is to show that virtually anyone can add polish to their paintings with a little dedication and enough patience – and with these simple techniques, he succeeds admirably.
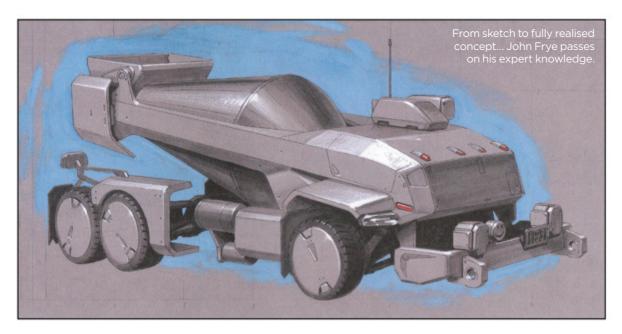
DETAILS

Topics covered
- Natural blends
- Basic blending techniques
- Brush settings
- Pen pressure
- Keeping your focus

Length
62 minutes

Rating
★★★★☆

ARTIST PROFILE
ANTHONY JONES

AJ has been working in the entertainment industry since 2007, executing projects for some of the biggest studios in the industry, including Blizzard, Sony Santa Monica, Paramount Pictures, Hasbro Toys and Western Costumes. AJ is a part-time instructor and educator at robotpencil.net. He's been teaching since 2010, and has educated and helped thousands of aspiring artists to begin their careers. He still does freelance as a way to stay fresh and have new things to teach. AJ's mantra is that talent is earned, not given.

www.robotpencil.net

From sketch to fully realised concept... John Frye passes on his expert knowledge.

Qianjiao Ma covers the use of perspective and lighting as he sketches the interior of an abandoned spaceship.

Beginner's Guide to Sketching: Robots, Vehicles & Sci-Fi Concepts

HARD LINE Brush up on your basic drawing principles and learn how to develop them into futuristic creations with this practical guide

Editor Marisa Lewis **Publisher** 3dtotal Publishing **Price** £24 **Web** www.3dtotal.com **Available** Now

Science fiction is a constant source of inspiration for traditional and digital artists – just take a look at our regular FXPosé sections. However, these ideas can be just as intimidating as they are fascinating if an artist doesn't know how to realise them on the page. With this guide though, 3dtotal Publishing has brought together a collection of 16 leading sci-fi illustrators and concept artists to lay down the fundamentals of drawing and help readers make the leap into the other-worldly.
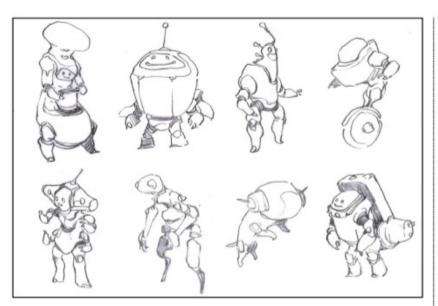
What separates this companion from others in 3dtotal's range, including a guide to characters and creatures, is a focus on drawing 'hard-surface' concept designs. Or to put it another way, the industrial surfaces that give spaceships, mechs and robots that sleek, manufactured feel. And while these techniques are used here to realise outlandish creations, they can also be easily transferred to more domestic mechanical objects.

Broken down into four main sections, this book walks artists through the basics of selecting drawing materials (including a rather worrying observation that some art
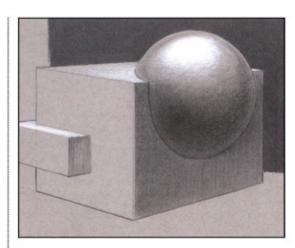
> ❝ It's a strong primer that both new and seasoned artists would benefit from reading ❞

students question to need to draw by hand), all the way through to advanced projects that demonstrate how software can accentuate your illustrations. The two chapters in between include a look at projects that put theory into practice, and a section that explores how ideas can be quickly iterated and brought to life.

It's the 'Getting Started' chapter, though, that contains the art theory substance which illustrators would do well to study. Covering core techniques such as lighting and perspective, this section is a strong primer that both new and seasoned

John Frye covers the essentials of lighting and materials using a variety of basic objects.

artists would benefit from reading. Later chapters demonstrate how these concepts can be pushed and tweaked to create everything from lunar buggies to robot house servants, but if you haven't got the basics down, your efforts are going to suffer.

It's not all rigorous art exercises, though. Dotted throughout the projects are insights from the contributors that remind you to keep your concepts grounded, even if you've mastered the drawing essentials. After all, the best science fiction vehicles and robots contain an element of realism and practicality that help viewers accept what they're seeing. And with the aid of these practical illustration tips, you'll be able to start doing just that, too.

RATING ★★★★☆

Concept designer and illustrator Ang Chen generates a range of flat thumbnails, before choosing to develop one into a distinctive wheeled household robot.

Marvelocity: The Marvel Comics Art of Alex Ross

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT Relive almost three decades of high-energy comic book art by a master of the medium

Authors Chip Kidd & Geoff Spear **Publisher** Titan **Price** £35 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Alex Ross only ever had one dream: to draw and paint superheroes. For nearly 30 years now he's being doing exactly that, bring to life some of the biggest Marvel characters, including Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four, the Avengers and many more.

This collection goes right back to the beginning of Alex's journey as an artist, complete with a batch of charming Spider-Man drawings he scribbled at the age of five, and charts his development into a leading comics illustrator. Already hitting a standard most of us can only dream of before he was even 20, Marvelocity also includes critical feedback from the man himself on his own work, not all of it favourable.

Broken down by projects, properties and influences, the bulk of this book is a sometimes overcrowded visual barrage of high-octane art that ranges from sketches to paintings and sculptures. Even if you're not the most well-seasoned comic book fan, the quality of art and storytelling on display is admirable in itself.

Alex conveys the futuristic feel of Spider-Man's updated costume, complete with glowing logo.

Alex's pencil sketches of Captain America, when the role is taken over by Bucky Barnes following the murder of Steve Rogers.

Rounding off the collection is an exclusive short comic written and illustrated by Alex. Without giving away the ending, the story captures the sense of wonder that got him into comics to begin with. A fascination which he, in turn, has passed on to generations of readers.

RATING ★★★★☆

The Pre-Raphaelite Language of Flowers

FLORAL TRIBUTE Discover the true meanings behind symbolic flowers in well-known Pre-Raphaelite paintings with this bouquet of stunning images

Author Debra Mancoff **Publisher** Prestel **Price** £13 **Web** https://prestelpublishing.randomhouse.de **Available** Now

To the untrained eye, the inclusion of flowers in paintings by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood could appear to be little more than decoration. However, an appreciation of the paintings by the 19th century artists will take into account the symbolism inscribed into the most humble of details, of which flowers are some of the most nuanced.

In this collection, some of the most famous Pre-Raphaelite paintings are studied in an effort to tease out the hidden visual language of their flowers. Whether it's the treacherous lilies found floating in Hylas and the Nymphs or the trail of poppies dropped in Night with Her Train of Stars, there's a whole floral lexicon just waiting to be unpacked. Each image is contextualised to give the reader a better understanding of the imagery.

Also accompanying the bulk of the paintings are cropped sections that detail the flowers of the image in question. These provide a valuable opportunity to study the delicate brushwork of the great artists, as well as demonstrating the most indispensable of the brotherhood's doctrines: "To produce thoroughly good paintings and statues."

Learn the significance of orange blossom, in John Everett Millais' The Bridesmaid.

Here, John William Waterhouse depicts water lilies in human form as nymphs luring Hylas to his doom.

RATING ★★★★☆

Workshops assets are available...
If you see the video workshop badge then you can watch the artist in action. Turn to page 6 to see how you can get hold of the video.

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
Traditional Artist
Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists

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This issue:

FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS

Hannah Yata

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Oil paint, gesso, charcoal, graphite **WEB:** www.hannahyata.com

Hannah's art interweaves nature, mythology, archetypes and the divine feminine. She creates vibrant dreamscapes that explode from the canvas.

1 EDEN
"I used a direct approach for this painting, starting first with gestural lines and quickly adding in colour. I built up the scene using many layers of oil paint."

2 LUMINARY
"Another painting that was built mostly in monotones. Pigments were glazed heavily in this piece to create a glowing effect. The finished canvas measured 40x68 inches."
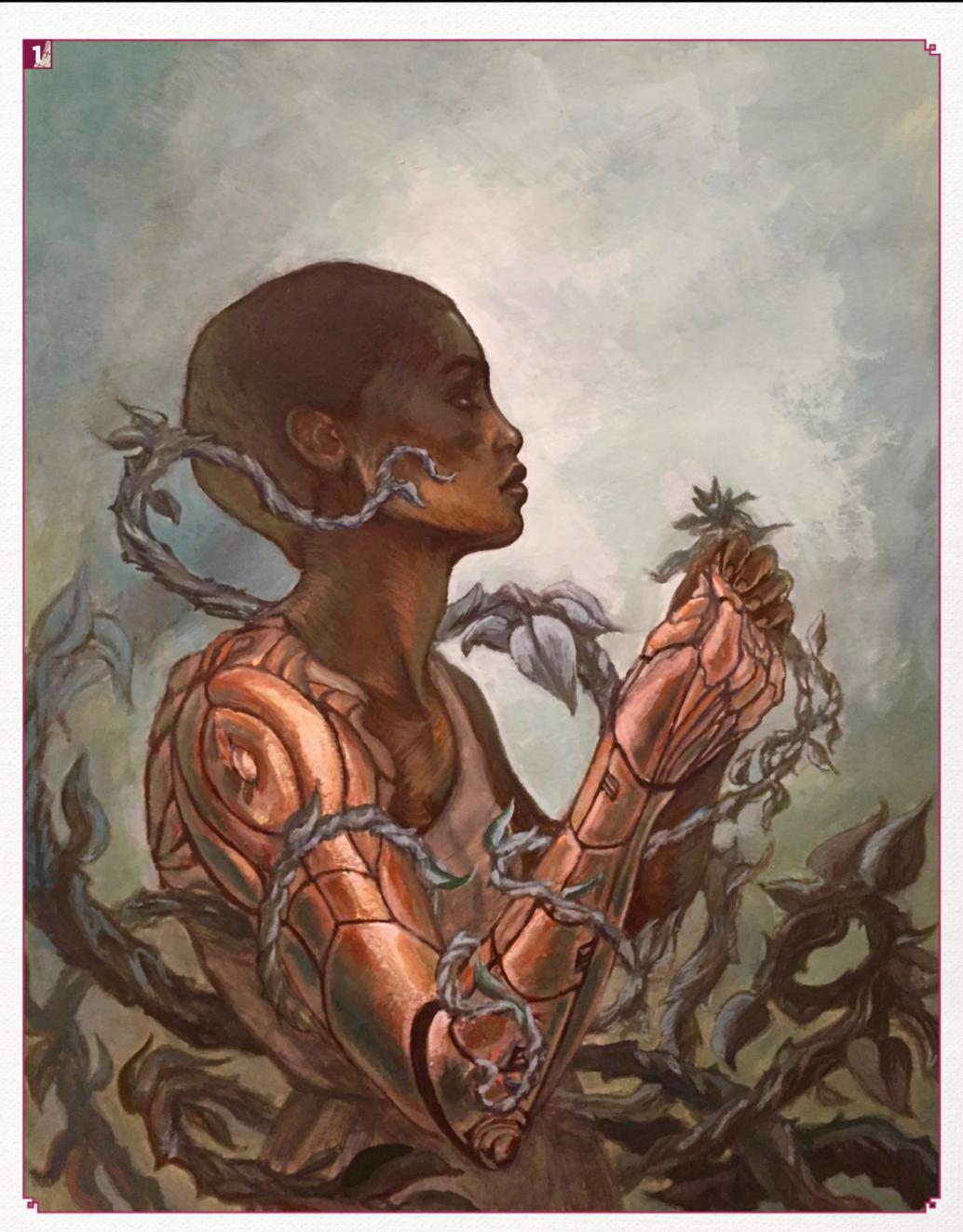
3 IN THE VALLEY OF THE MOON
"I used a more of a direct approach here, with very little underpainting. The birds were added one by one. Feel free to count them and let me know how many there are!"

Want to submit your work? Visit http://ifxm.ag/getinifx

Christy Tortland

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Gouache, watercolour, gold leaf **WEB:** www.christytortland.com

Christy's a freelance illustrator and writer whose art focuses mostly on powerful, vulnerable and brave women. Her work has recently decorated the tail of a commemorative F-35 fighter jet of the Royal Netherlands Air Force.

1 ORGANIC
"For this I used gouache on cold press paper. It was a challenge to capturing the juxtaposition of organic versus synthetic, and the shape of the form and figure."

2 GOLDEN EYES
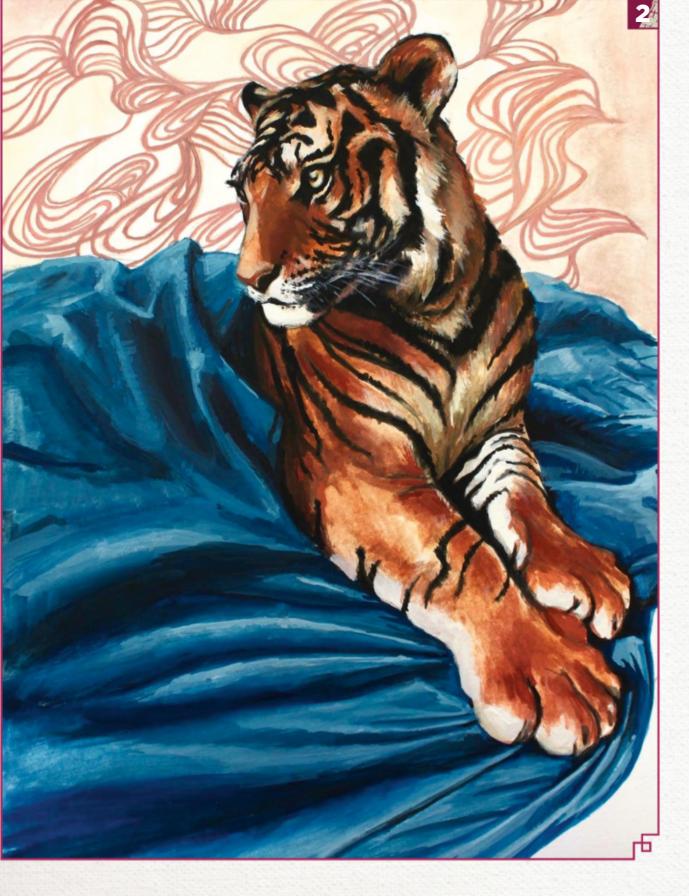"This painting is dedicated to a special sanctuary and a special tiger, who survived despite many obstacles."

3 HERA'S COMPASSION
"This gouache painting depicts the queen of the gods meeting her future husband, the deceitful Zeus. He's disguised himself as a bird in order to gain her affections."
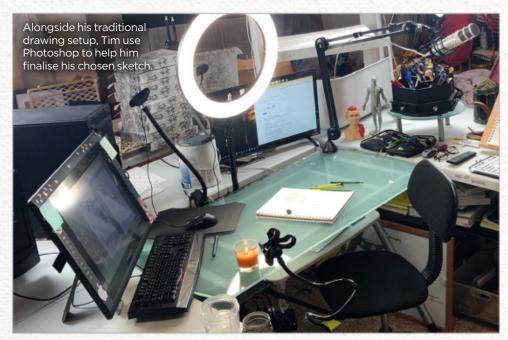

4 SNOW WHITE
"My take on a classic fairy tale princess, created using watercolour and gold leaf."

Alongside his traditional drawing setup, Tim use Photoshop to help him finalise his chosen sketch.

Pencil   *Photoshop*

DRAW A RANGE OF TEXTILES & TEXTURES

TIM VON RUEDEN develops a pencil image that showcases different materials and surfaces, while fulfilling one convention attendee's request for art diversity

One of the workshops I used to teach was called I Can Draw ANYTHING. It was rooted in the idea that as artists we can draw literally anything, but the real trick was learning how to believe in that.

My students ranged from basic to intermediate skill level, but with some encouragement they learned how empowering your mind can give you belief in your own abilities. This led into learning how to learn and how to train your eye to really see.

Tim's drawing kit contains a range of traditional and mechanical pencils. Its compact size makes it perfect for taking to conventions.

Materials and textures are the perfect example of this and because of that, I'll include a lot of material studies in this workshop. Over the next few pages, this workshop will go over a similar learning set to showcase how to distinguish the materials you're creating and the attributes that are unique to each.

> ❝ **Put yourself into unfamiliar settings and see beyond them, into the unknown** ❞

Breaking the process down into the simplest of terms, I believe in taking four simple steps for drawing any material or texture. The steps are observe, analyse, interpret and execute. First, you need to observe the world around you. This is the easiest step because we're constantly looking around us and seeing what's there. Put yourself into unfamiliar settings and see beyond them, into the realm of the unknown.

However, you must also analyse what you're seeing, look at different subject matters and determine two key factors. Is this object reflecting/absorbing light, and does this object have a smooth or rough surface? Every material can be placed on these two spectrums, and therefore, can be interpreted on how to capture its likeness. So a metallic smooth surface will have a higher contrasted look while a wool sweater will be matte in appearance with a focus on the surface texture. With time and enough practice, you'll be able to draw anything.

For this workshop, I'm demonstrating this knowledge as I draw different materials and textures. I want to show how to use these different elements to create a beautiful and engaging piece of art.

Tim is an independent, travelling convention artist. He aims to inspire and mentor others through hard work while encouraging ambitions. See his art at www.instagram.com/vonnart.

1 The importance of thumbnailing

Thumbnails help to generate variety and creative flow when thinking about how to capture your illustration. I had this idea in my head for over a year after talking with a convention attendee, who wanted to see more characters of colour represented in the fantasy genre. So ever since then I've wanted to create that character as a majestic angel. With this workshop, her moment has come!

2 Creating your own references

I recommend using your own reference pictures because you can create a more direct pose and interpretation, and avoid any copyright issues. Have fun with it and if you can't take them just of yourself, include your friends: they may bring something better to the shot that you weren't considering before.

MATERIALS

PAPER
- Strathmore Mixed Media sketchbook

TOOLS
- 2H traditional pencil,
- 0.2mm mechanical pencil
- Mono Zero Eraser – circle tip
- Kneaded eraser
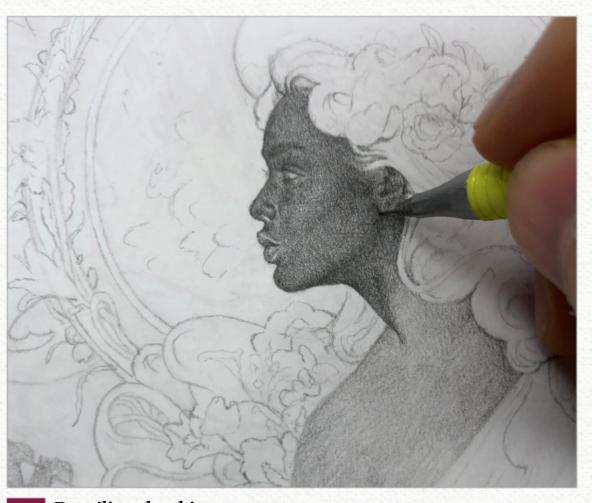
SOFTWARE
- iPad Pro, Photoshop

3 Digital thumbnailing

Although I mostly work traditionally, I taught how to paint in Photoshop so I still have a love for gesturing and capturing a larger illustration first in a digital format. This enables me to make minor adjustments easily – or carry out aggressive reimagining if necessary!

4 Beginning on the underdrawing

After I'm set with this digital underpainting, I print the image at one per cent Opacity. I like to keep it light so that it acts as a foundation rather than a final image. I strongly believe in letting intuition take over in the creation process so I work with the underdrawing more as a guideline. You'll see how my final result slightly varies.

5 Starting on the skin

For this workshop I'm separating each material so that it's clearer to see the progression along the way, beginning with skin, which absorbs light unless it's covered in a coating such as sweat or water. So I'll shade it to give it a matte appearance. With a darker skin shade, I like to work in layers to build up that darker value.

6 Detailing the skin

With a good value foundation of her skin in place, I begin to add the details and contours of the underlying anatomy and structure. This is heavily dependent on the reference for the nuances, so be aware of that during your photoshoot session. I'm also depicting a valued face with less contrast so that the character stands out among the other materials that are in the scene.

7 Looking for hair inspiration

My art inspirations include Mucha and Harry Clarke, so I use this illustration as an opportunity to showcase a different way of creating hair against more realistic materials. I start by outlining the hair strands, almost like spaghetti. I'm focusing on the flow and arrangement of hair as shapes.

8 Ensuring the hair captures the viewer's attention

With the time-consuming outlining finished, I decide to darken the hair and add gradients throughout the hair to help drive the viewer's focus. Hair is always tricky for artists, but my advice is to block it out in shapes, even with realism. The less you focus on creating every individual strand, the better! ➤➤

9 Drawing the figure's wings

Feathers tend to be less reflective and more focused on the texture, whether smooth or rough. So I begin creating them with a value pass and light blocking to help save time. It's a more efficient way of working. I turn my pencil to the side to give me more surface area to work with.

10 Adding details to the wings

Feathers and wings are so much fun to draw, and I recommend having references to hand so that you can capture them accurately (wings have a specific patterning to them). Usually, they begin with smaller feathers leading into larger ones for the wingspan. I also enjoy creating the imperfections they may have, such as a wedge of space or a cut.

11 Laying the foundations of the staff

The staff was meant to be polished marble with gold accents. These reflective properties are in high contrast to the more matte elements such as skin, feathers and the fabric around it. I'm creating this effect with higher contrasts and a focus on highlights littered throughout. But first, I'm choosing to outline the staff, which will give me a strong foundation to start putting down my details.

12 Making the staff stand out

With the outline foundation set in place, I can comfortably shade within it to create a high-contrast object. The more intricate detailing can also be meticulous, but it's worth the effort in the end. I also shade a slightly darker value around the staff to add more contrast, making it appear to stand out further.

13 Establish the appearance of the fabric

Fabric can range from sleek and shiny to matte and dull. How you shade it will help sell the idea of the fabric you're trying to depict. I'm working to create a similar look to my reference image with golden sheets of folding fabric, but with less intensity. I begin by outlining the shapes and blocking out areas of shadow.

14 Categorise your fabric

I can now add value and shading to create further layers of depth and weight. When drawing and recreating fabric, the types of wrinkles created can all be placed under three separate categories: hanging/relaxed, stretched/tension, and scrunched/compressed. Hanging fabric tends to be loose and have a flowing appearance. Stretched fabric creates long lines, usually with a point of support. Compressed fabrics bunch into each other, creating scrunched-looking areas.

15 Giving the drawing a final polish

Now begins the exciting time of texecuting the final polish on the illustration. Often, this means erasing any type of smudging while working, adding tighter lines where they're lacking, and editing values throughout to create a more cohesive and better-flowing value composition. And if you created your materials correctly, they should balance each other in your style while still feeling distinctly their own. ●

First Impressions

✳ Eric Fortune ✳

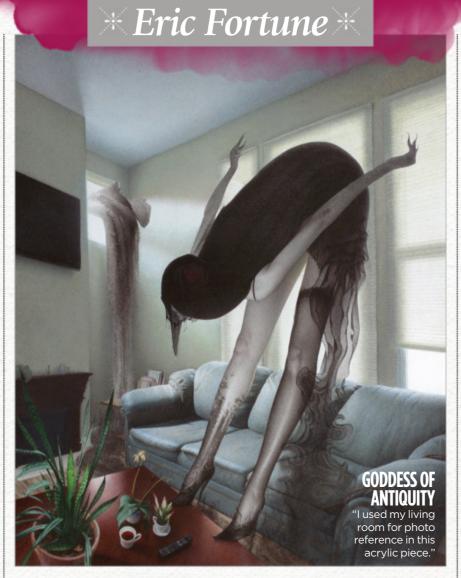This US artist on how social media success can lead to artistic self-development

Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?
I'm from the small town of Coshocton, Ohio. I grew up with my family and also several classmates who were really into drawing. My grade school and high school teacher also made a big impact on my life.

You're a child, you see a painting that changes everything. Where are you and what are you looking at?
I was probably sat in front of the television, watching cartoons. I drew robots endlessly as a kid. Transformers and G.I. Joe were probably my favourite shows. My world expanded again after watching Fist of the North Star and Akira as a teenager.

What was your next step in art? Did other interests vie for attention?
I didn't know any professional artists growing up. Thankfully, my high school teacher, Mrs Beall, convinced me that an art career was worth pursuing. I loved video games and cartoons, but I feel like those both

GODDESS OF ANTIQUITY
"I used my living room for photo reference in this acrylic piece."

> 66 **I thought the jobs would keep coming in after that commission. I was wrong** 99

A WANT TO BELIEVE
"This is a personal piece I did on religious belief, using acrylic on watercolour paper."

informed my art instead of competing with it.

Does one person stand out as being helpful during your early years?
My grade school teacher Mrs Cheney without a doubt. She was such an encouraging person.

Can you describe the place where you usually create your art?
It's a bedroom-turned-studio in my house. I've put up a few bookshelves to store some art books. I have an art desk in one corner and an easel in the opposite corner. It's a little cramped but it's enough.

What are your painting rituals?
I like listening to lectures, podcasts and so on while working. I've

noticed that attempting to learn while making art can really slow me down because I like to pause and take notes. I'm trying to do less of that.

Tell us about your first paid commissioned piece
It involved creating packaging illustrations for flavoured tea during my senior year at art school. It was pretty exciting and I thought the jobs would keep coming in after that. I was wrong. It took a long time to build up my clientele.

Is your art evolving? What's the most recent experiment you made?
I think so. Mostly in the content of my work, but also in medium and scale. I'm trying my hand at oils again and hope to have a new body of larger paintings finished in the next few years. Stay tuned.

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way?
Not sure I would. It's overcoming all those challenges that made me who I am today. However, I might tell myself to spend more time with loved ones. I often think our society's obsession with work ethic has become maladaptive and decidedly unhealthy.

How has the art industry improved since you've been working in it?
It's exciting to see some artists gain a large social media following for doing personal work. There seems to be more potential for autonomy and stability by having a broad base of fans funding your art goals.

In the near future I think there may be a massive boom in creativity once something like a universal basic income gives people more free time and stability to pursue their passions. I think that might be the biggest improvement our industry and society could have.

You can follow Eric's artistic progress on Instagram using @ericfortuneartist, or by visiting www.ericfortune.com.

PUT A PAUSE IN YOUR DAY

With so many demands from work, home and family, there never seem to be enough hours in the day for you. Why not press pause once in a while, curl up with your favourite magazine and put a little oasis of 'you' in your day.

PRESS PAUSE
ENJOY A MAGAZINE MOMENT

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